

NOVEMBER 4, 1921

No. 840

7 Cents

FAME AND

FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

HAL'S BUSINESS VENTURE OR MAKING A SUCCESS OF HIMSELF

OTHER STORIES

Self-Made Man



The grocer's boy was pulling money out of the till, when Hal sprang toward him and grasped his wrist. Hazel came in at that moment and saw what was happening.

"You thief! I've caught you!" cried Hal in angry tones.

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NEW YORK

NOVEMBER

Price 7 Cents

Hal's Business Adventure

OR, MAKING A SUCCESS OF HIMSELF

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—A Dutchman in Trouble.

"By shinks! I stood dis business no more. I sell me oud dis store right away so soon as now, off I lose money py it!" cried Jake Stahl, the proprietor of a small corner grocery in the busy town of Dexter.

"What's the trouble now, Mr. Stahl?" asked Hal Hardy, his general assistant, who had just come in after making some deliveries to customers. "Have the boys been bothering you again?"

"Madder! I'm sick of der business I vos up against all der vholes. Der boys 'round here make mine life vorse as a lunatic asylums. You know dot yourseluf. Yust so quick as you go py der vagon oud on der route dem loafers begin deir monkeyshines."

"I thought the officer on the beat chased them away and threatened to pull them in if they didn't stop annoying you," said Hal.

"Vot good did it done? Off dot cop stood all day in front off der shop maybe I haf peace und quiet. Dot ain'd vot he vos paid for. He don'd been around more as two or dree times a day. Dem young loafers seem to know yust when he vos coming. When he shows up you don'd seem von off dem in sight, but yust so soon as he vawks ub der block dey come oud off deir holes, look in der store to seen off I'm alone, und den dey commence. Py shinger! Off I vunce got mine hands on vun off dem, dere would be something didding, I ped you!" said Stahl.

"If I were you, I'd go to the station house and make a complaint to the captain of the precinct," said Hal.

"Vot would be done?"

"He'd probably send a couple of detectives in plain clothes around here to watch. If the boys started in to get gay, two or three of them would doubtless be arrested. You'd be summoned to court to identify and prosecute them, and I don't believe you'd be troubled much after that."

"Vell, I try me dot. Where is der nearest station houses?"

"Four blocks away, on Sherman street."

"You vatch der store und I go dere right away quick."

"Tell the officer at the desk that you want to see the captain, and if he's in you'll be shown into his office."

"Und off he ain'd in, vot den?"

"Find out when he is likely to be there and go back again."

The Dutchman took off his apron, put on his coat and hat and left the store. Hal followed him as far as the door and looked out, but there wasn't a boy in sight. The store was situated in a very ordinary neighborhood, not far from the river that ran partly around the town, and Mr. Stahl's customers were mostly people whose incomes were limited. While Stahl was away, Hal waited on several customers, and among the rest a pretty, modest-looking girl named Hazel Price, who worked in a factory a few blocks away and lived with her widowed mother in a three-room apartment of a cheap tenement.

Hazel was on her way home from work and stopped to get half a pound of tea, some butter, and a package of sugar. The Prices did not have much money, but they were cash customers wherever they dealt, never asking for any trust. For that reason one might suppose that the Dutchman would consider them among his star customers; but he didn't, and the reason was because the aggregate of their weekly purchases was small.

Hal thought Hazel the nicest girl he had ever met, and he liked to talk with her. What Hazel thought of Hal must be judged by her attitude toward him.

"You're looking fine this afternoon, Miss Price," he said, when she came into the store.

"Thank you for the compliment," returned the girl, with a smile.

"Well, you deserve it. What can I do for you?"

Hazel gave her order. Hal filled it, marked the slip paid, and offered to carry the goods around to her house as soon as his boss got back, but the girl said that she wouldn't trouble him, as she could take her purchases with her as well as not.

"How are things at the factory?"

"Rather slow. If they don't pick up some of us will be laid off."

"Which you wouldn't like, of course, if the lay-off struck you."

"No; I can hardly afford to be idle. It's all I can do to pay the rent, support us, and buy the few things that mother and I need."

"Then I hope, for your sake, that things pick up."

Early on the following afternoon two detectives appeared on the scene and hung about the entrance of a near-by saloon. When Hal loaded up and drove away on his rounds for the second time

that day, the boys made their appearance, and after a consultation two of them strolled up to the grocery store and looked in. Seeing that Stahl was at his desk making up his accounts, they suddenly seized a bushel basket of potatoes and dumped them all over the sidewalk. The eyes of the two officers were on them, and the moment they laid hands on the basket the men started to head them off when they ran. The result was both lads were caught and marched struggling and scared into the store as the Dutchman was coming out like a wildman. Stahl wanted to annihilate the pair of young toughs on the spot, but the detectives stopped him.

"Will you make a charge against these chaps if we run them in?" said one of the officers.

"Vill I make a sharge!" roared the Dutchman. "Vot you dink I complained at der station house for? I vill prosecute dem to der full extent of der law. I vill preak dis monkey business up off it took all I am vorth."

"Very well. You will receive a summons to appear at court to-morrow morning," said the detective, and then the prisoners were marched off and locked up.

The rest of the gang had fled, and they did not dare return. Some of them carried word to the homes of the arrested ones, and the mothers of the two boys had a fit over the news. They slapped shawls over their heads and started for the station house to make a protest. They found that the groceryman had lodged a charge of malicious mischief against their offsprings, and that their chances of going to the workhouse for at least six months was good. The irate mothers then started for the grocery store to give Stahl a piece of their minds. The Dutchman was busy when they arrived, and Hal was selling green stuff outside. They stood around waiting their chance to tackle Stahl, breathing fire and brimstone to each other.

"What can I do for you, Mrs. Finnerty?" he said to the nearest, as politely as though waiting on a woman of quality.

It was this politeness and his ever genial smile that had made him a favorite with all the women in the neighborhood.

"Nothing," said Mrs. Finnerty shortly. "I'm waitin' to see that Dootchman."

At this moment the groceryman came to the door and looked at the two women.

"Vell, ladies, you vant somedings in der vegetable line, yes?"

"Begorra, it's satisfaction we want and not vegetables, do yez moind that!" snapped Mrs. Finnerty.

"Satisfaction! Vot you got to complain about?"

"What do yez mane by havin' me son arristed?"

"And me son, too, you thafe of the wurruld!" interjected Mrs. Moran.

"Vot's der madder mit you?" said Stahl.

"The matter is this, you moon-faced omadhaun: if ye sind thim to the workhouse, I'll be the death of yez, so I will."

"And me husband Patrick will come around here and bate ye black and blue!" threatened Mrs. Moran.

"What's der madder mit you, anyvay?"

The groceryman looked aggressive himself.

"Are yez goin' to lit thim b'ys out?" demanded Mrs. Finnerty.

"Vot you dink I am, anyvays? You suppose I stood for dem loafers off yours?"

"What's that? Do yez call me son a loafer?" shouted Mrs. Finnerty.

"And do yez call me Dinny a loafer, too?" roared Mrs. Moran.

"Dey are worse as loafers!" snapped Stahl.

With one accord the furious women dived into a box of carrots with both hands.

"Here, vot are you apoud?" cried the groceryman.

Biff! biff! biff! biff! The carrots landed all over his face and chest.

"Police! Police!" shouted Stahl, retreating into his store amid a shower of reddish missiles.

CHAPTER II.—Hal Finds a Fat Pocketbook.

Hal immediately interfered and grabbed both of the women.

"Let go of me arm, will yez!" said Mrs. Finnerty, struggling to throw another carrot.

"Stop, stop, ladies!" protested Hal, keeping a strong grip on each of their wrists. "Do you want to be arrested, too?"

The groceryman's shouts brought a crowd around his store in no time. It was a thickly populated neighborhood, and it didn't take much to draw a big gathering of the curious. Stahl had retreated to the back of the store, but seeing that Hal was keeping the two women and the crowd in check, he ventured to return to the doorway. He was immediately assailed in violent terms by the Irish ladies. As Hal had no control over their tongues, they made full use of them, while the spectators jeered and geyed both sides with generous impartiality.

"Police! police!" shouted the groceryman.

A bunch of greens, hurled slyly by one of the kid gang, caught Stahl in the mouth and raised a general laugh at his expense. A small potato struck him in the stomach. The Dutchman made a dash in the direction the potato came from and the boys broke away and scattered. Stahl shook his fist at them, and they retaliated with catcalls. At this stage a policeman showed up, attracted by the unusual excitement. The groceryman wanted him to arrest the two women. Hal explained that the women's sons had been arrested for annoying his boss and that they were angry over it and had called at the store to get Mr. Stahl to let up on the boys. When he refused to do so, they had lost their heads and thrown a few vegetables at him.

"A few! Look all around der door. I lose me der price off dot stuff. By shinger! I vill got square somehow."

During all this altercation the two Irish women were not silent. They were a bit cowed at the prospect of being pinched, as they called it, and protested that they were hard-working women, the mothers of families, and that there was nobody at home to look after their rooms and get supper for their husbands who were employed on the docks. As Stahl vigorously insisted on their arrest, the officer reluctantly marched them off, Hal going along just as reluctantly. The women

set up a howl, a portion of the crowd followed behind, some of them expressing sympathy.

"Let them go at the corner, officer," said Hal. "I don't want to have them locked up. They simply acted foolishly."

"Sure it's a gintleman yez are, Mister Hardy," said Mrs. Finnerty. "It's a pity yez wurruk for such an ould omadhaun as that Dootchman. Ye ought to quit him."

The officer said he couldn't let the prisoners go now without running the risk of getting in trouble himself.

"I must take them to the station house, then you can make it easy for them with the desk sergeant, and maybe he won't hold them," said the policeman.

So the party proceeded to the station house, where they lined up before the desk. The officer stated the case, and then Hal told the facts, but suggested that the women be let go, as he didn't believe they meant to break out the way they did. The captain was in his office and the case was finally put up to him. When he heard the facts he peremptorily ordered the women locked up on the charge of disorderly conduct, and they were taken to a cell.

The captain evidently did not approve of Hal's attitude. He asked him sharply if it wasn't a fact that his employer had been greatly pestered by the Finnerty and Moran gang. Hal admitted that he had, and said he was not attempting to defend the boys, but that he knew their mothers to be hard-working and respectable women, and that he could not help sympathizing with them for forgetting themselves.

"Well, you're a witness against them, and if your employer presses the case, you will have to testify in the police court to-morrow. That's all."

Hal left the station house and started back to the store. As he started to cross the second street an express wagon bore down on him so fast that he had to spring forward to get out of the way. He lost his balance, fell, and slid into the gutter. He got a good shaking up and skinned one of his elbows. As he started to rise, his fingers closed over a soft, bulky object in the gutter. Looking at it, he saw it was a fat wallet. He started to open it, then changed his mind, slipped it into his pocket and went on his way. It was now after five o'clock, and Patrick Moran and Owen Finnerty returned from their day's work to find their apartments locked up and their wives away.

As everybody in the tenement had heard of the arrest of the two boys, and had later on heard Mrs. Finnerty and Mrs. Moran had been pulled in, too, for assaulting the Dutch grocer, the long-shoremen soon heard a distorted version of the circumstances. They adjourned to the corner saloon for a drink before starting out on the rampage. One drink succeeded another, and they talked loudly of what they intended to do to the Dutchman. One of their friends ventured to suggest that they had better be careful or they might land in the station house, too. The long-shoremen apparently didn't care at that moment where they landed so long as they cleaned up the groceryman.

They finally started off on their mission, breathing threats of vengeance. While they were on

their way, a boy on friendly terms with Hal hustled on ahead and, entering the store, warned the grocer's clerk of what was coming. Hal realized that the situation looked serious and he told his employer that he had better get out of the way. The Dutchman, however, had his mad up, and he refused to budge. He went to the telephone, called up the station house and asked for protection. Two officers were at once sent to the store. Finnerty and Moran couldn't pass the saloon at the corner of the block without going in and having a couple of more drinks.

They were ripe for all kinds of trouble when they left the saloon. Reaching the grocery store, they walked in, with blood in their eyes. Stahl was waiting on a woman, and they held back. Hal went up to them.

"We got word that you two were coming here to make trouble," he said, "and Mr. Stahl has sent for the police. They will be here any minute. If you'll take my advice, you'll haul in your horns and go home, for if you start any rough-house here you will surely be arrested."

"Didn't your boss have me wife and me son Mike arrister, and ain't they in jail this minute?" demanded Finnerty, with ugly vengeance.

"And ain't me wife and me son Dinny there, too?" put in Moran.

"That's true enough, but they're not there for nothing."

"Well, we're not goin' to argue the matter with you," said Finnerty aggressively. "We'll settle this thing with the Dutchman."

"You'll settle it with the cops, if you aren't careful. Here are two now," said Hal.

The detectives walked into the store.

"Are these the men you telephoned about?" asked one of them.

"Yes, but they haven't made any trouble yet," replied Hal.

"What do you want here?" the officer demanded of Finnerty.

"This Dutchman had me wife and son Mike arrested, and Moran's, too, and——"

"I know all about it," said the detective curtly. "They were pulled in for cause. If you two are looking for trouble, you'll get more than you want. Get right out of here and go home."

The officers seized the men by their arms and put them out of the store, after which they warned them away. The detectives remained around a while to see that they didn't come back and then returned to the station house. Hal boarded and lodged with his employer and his wife in the living rooms at the back of the store. Stahl went to his supper at six o'clock and when he re-entered the store Hal was called to his.

When he came back he had another talk with his employer and advised him to go to the station house and withdraw his complaint against the two women on condition that they paid for whatever damage they had caused. Stahl finally yielded the point, went to the station house, and, after a lot of trouble, induced the captain to release Mrs. Finnerty and Mrs. Moran, who at once hurried back to the tenement where they lived. Their husbands, pretty well loaded by this time, saw them coming along and followed them up to their rooms. By that time Stahl's grocery store was closed for the night, and Hal was seat-

ed on his cot in his little room at the back of the store, looking over the pocketbook he had found by the light of a small lamp.

CHAPTER III.—A Thief in the Night.

The wallet contained \$600 in money and a number of newspaper clippings. There was not a scrap of paper, nor anything that gave a clue to the owner. Hal counted the money over twice, examined each clipping carefully, and then wondered how he would ever be able to restore it to the person it belonged to, for he was a strictly honest boy, who had no thought of appropriating to himself anything that did not belong to him. About eleven o'clock next morning Hal and his employer went to the police court to press the case against the boys, leaving Mrs. Stahl in charge of the store.

Mrs. Finnerty and Mrs. Moran were in court, with a number of their female acquaintances and sympathizers. The boys pleaded not guilty, but their appearance was rather against them. Stahl told his story in a vigorous way. Hal corroborated it in a general way. The two detectives who caught the boys in the act gave their testimony. All the lads had to say in their own behalf was that they "didn't mean nuttin'." The magistrate lost no time in pronouncing them guilty and imposing a sentence of three months in the workhouse. Mrs. Finnerty started to make a tearful and rather violent protest, but was squelched by a court official, and the boys were hustled out of the room. The next case was called and Mr. Stahl left the court with Hal, feeling highly gratified over the result of the proceedings.

Though none of the Finnerty and Moran bunch appeared near the store, they had not forgotten him. They convened in the cellar of the Finnerty tenement and arranged a campaign of retaliation. They organized themselves into a secret society called the "Red Avengers," and that evening, just as the shades of night fell, a big stone smashed in one of Stahl's windows and damaged a couple of dollars' worth of his stock. Hal was alone in the store at the time, the Dutchman being at his supper. The crash brought the groceryman out with a hop, skip and jump, and when he saw what had happened his excitement and rage knew no bounds. Of course, the smash brought a crowd around the store, and there was a lot of speculation as to who had broken the glass.

Stahl had no doubt but one of the hostile gang was at the bottom of it, and he telephoned the police. A detective called around, looked at the broken window and at the stone, and was at no loss to lay it at some bad boy's door. The problem was to find the boy. A glazier was called in and the grocery window was repaired. The next day was Saturday, always the busiest day in the week with the grocery trade. Just at dark, when the store was full of customers, the new pane of glass in the window was smashed exactly like the other had been.

Of course, there was a lot of excitement again around the Stahl grocery, and in the midst of it a very mad Dutchman. He had been obliged to

pay for the other window, as the landlord would not do it, and another glazier's bill faced him. The police were again notified, and another detective came around and inspected the damage. When the store was locked up, about eleven Saturday night, Hal removed all the stock from the broken window, while the groceryman looked over the boards that had been nailed over the break. It was after midnight when Hal turned in, and, being tired after his long day's work, he was soon asleep. An hour or so later he was awakened by a noise, and, sitting up, he traced it through his open door to the broken window of the store.

He listened and was presently satisfied that some one was loosening the boards, doubtless intending to get in that way and steal what they could. Hal sprang out of bed, ran to the telephone and connected with the station house. He told the desk man what was going on, and said if officers hurried there the rascals might be caught. He was told that several policemen would be sent at once. Hal then crept over to the window and saw one of the boards being removed. It took him five minutes to get the second board off. Then he picked away the jagged pieces of broken glass so he could get a hole large enough to crawl in through without cutting himself. After that he paused in his operations and he left the window, evidently to take a look around the corner and up and down the street.

Satisfied that the coast was clear, he crawled into the store. As he did so, Hal retreated to his room. The intruder lighted a match and looked around, for Stahl was too economical to keep even a low gas-jet burning over his small safe. Hal saw that he had a man to deal with—a short, thick-set, unshaven fellow, who seemed to be a professional crook. He went behind the counter and pulled out a drawer. Only twine and odds and ends were kept in it, and he shut it. Then he went to the desk, where the cash drawer was, put his hand under it to release the spring, and pulled it open. As Stahl never left any money in the drawer overnight, the thief was disappointed to find only an empty tray. He pushed it back and felt underneath it.

The fellow next tried the safe, to see if it was locked, and found that it was. Then he saw the partly open door leading into the little hallway, off which Hal's room was. He started for the door. Just as he reached it he stopped and listened. He had heard the sound of heavy footsteps on the sidewalk coming from two directions. Hal heard them, too, and surmised that the police had arrived. The footsteps stopped outside. The thief turned about, intending to hide behind the counter. Before he got two steps the boy sprang upon him and bore him to the floor.

CHAPTER IV.—Hal's Business Venture.

The two rolled and kicked about the floor, making considerable noise. The three policemen outside heard the sounds, and one of them put his shoulder to the front door to burst it in, for being big, husky fellows, the opening in the window was too small for them to venture through, though the chief had taken chances with it. Crash! The door was burst in by the united exertions of two of the officers, and then all three

rushed into the store. The smashing noise penetrated back to Stahl's bedroom and awakened him.

"Himmel! der loafers are wrecking mine store. Vot shall I done? Maype dey vill shoot me off I gone oud to stop dem."

He rushed to the open door looking into the living room, shut and locked it. Then he opened the window facing on the little yard and began shouting "Thieves! Murder! Thieves!" at the top of his lungs, and he had some voice.

His shouts aroused the people in the tenements above and at the back, and heads came to the windows overlooking the yard. In the meanwhile the officers got hold of the crook and Hal was able to get up. The boy explained matters and the thief was handcuffed. The yells of the Dutchman reached their ears.

"That's Mr. Stahl. He sleeps in the back. The bursting in of the door must have awakened him and he is raising the neighborhood," said Hal.

"Go and quiet him," said one of the policemen. "Light the gas first. I suppose this fellow put out the jet that was burning."

Hal went back and knocked on Stahl's bedroom door. The Dutchman had stopped shouting and was telling somebody on the floor above that thieves were in his store.

"Who's dere?" he said, in answer to Hal's knock.

"Me—Hal."

The groceryman opened the door.

"Vot is happened in der store? Is der vinders und doors all smashed py dot gang off loafers? I vill gone oud off business right away. I vill move py some udder street. Himmel, I am near dead mit heart failure."

"A thief came in the store, but we've caught him. The crash you heard was the police breaking in the door."

"For vhy did der police smash der door? Vhy dey not come in py der vinders?"

"You'll have to ask them. They're waiting to see you. Get into your clothes and come out. They have the thief handcuffed."

"I vill come in a minute."

Hal shut the door, leaving his employer to put on his clothes and quiet his better half, who was trembling with terror in bed. In a few minutes the Dutchman came into his store.

"You are the proprietor of this grocery?" said one of the officers.

"Yes, I am der poss. Is dot der purglar?"

"He is the man we caught here, and whom your clerk accuses of breaking in with intent to rob."

"Den I gif him in sharge. Take him py der station houses. But who vill paid me for der damage to mine door?"

"Be thankful you were not robbed. A carpenter will soon repair your door."

The officers left the store with the thief, and the door had to be nailed up and braced for the night. Stahl insisted that things were getting too hot for him in that neighborhood, and he was going to sell out.

"That's foolish. You have a pretty good trade," said Hal.

"Vot goot is der trade off I lose me all mine profits? Nein, I sold out so soon as somepody comes along mit an offer."

"How much do you want for the business, just as it stands?" asked Hal.

"Maybe I took \$800. I dink not apoud id."

Hal went to bed and was not disturbed the rest of the night. He looked the Sunday paper over in the morning, thinking he might find an advertisement about the wallet, but there was none. The Dutchman told Hal he was determined to sell out, and gave Hal an advertisement of the sale to take to the newspaper, which he did.

During the next few days several persons called to see the store and find out the price asked. By degrees Stahl dropped from \$800 to \$600, but failed to get a buyer. Business fell off more and more, and the Dutchman put another advertisement in the paper stating that his price was \$600 cash. That week Hazel Price lost her job at the factory, and she looked very glum when she told Hal. The boy told her not to worry, that he would lend her some money to carry her and her mother over till she got work again.

"That's very kind of you, Mr. Hardy," replied the girl gratefully. "You are a true friend, but I could not accept it except in extremity."

"You needn't feel diffident about it, Miss Hazel. I would consider it a privilege to do you a favor."

"Thank you. I appreciate your generosity very much and will never forget it."

Business had grown very unsatisfactory to him and he was thoroughly disgusted with the neighborhood. Hal had talked to Stahl about buying him out, but the Dutchman had wanted all cash, and Hal couldn't give it. On Sunday morning he called Hal out into the shop.

"Off you got \$500 cash I sold you der pusiness to-morrow," he said.

"I can afford to pay you but half cash, Mr. Stahl. I'll give you my note for \$250," replied Hal.

The Dutchman agreed to that, so the bargain was struck between them, and the sale was to be put through next day. Hal called on Hazel that evening, and told her and her mother that he had made terms with Mr. Stahl, and he would buy the store next day. They said they would look at the rooms at the back of the store as soon as they became vacant. Next day the sale was consummated and Stahl transferred his lease to Hal.

CHAPTER V.—Hal's First Day.

The first thing Hal did after the papers were signed and the store was made over to him was to call on the landlord and notify him of the change. He asked him to fix up the two rooms as soon as the Dutchman moved out. The landlord demurred at first, but Hal talked him into it. Then Hal asked Hazel to help him out at the store at the same wages she had been getting at the factory, and she consented to do it.

"I can trust you, Miss Hazel, and I know you will work for my interest; that is why I had rather have you than anybody else," he said.

She smilingly assured him she would do her best.

"I shall want you to start in to-morrow morning. I will affix a price tag this evening to the

groceries, most of which have a standard price. Such articles as are subject to occasional change will bear the current price. The green stuff, which I get fresh every morning at market change in price day to day, and I will post you every morning as to the day's prices. I shall have to put in my time at first delivering and canvassing for trade. When things get to running the way I want I'll hire a boy to make deliveries," said Hal.

Next morning Hal took possession of the business. He had given an order to a sign painter to paint a sign bearing his name to be hung over the door in place of Jake Stahl, and he intended to have his name painted on both windows, preceding the words: "Fine Groceries." He had also ordered five thousand 6x9 circulars to be struck off by a cheap printer in the neighborhood, announcing that Hal Hardy had bought out the grocery business heretofore conducted by Jake Stahl, and would conduct it on up-to-date principles.

He would carry a full line of staple goods, butter, eggs, cheese, fresh vegetables, etc., etc., and every cash purchaser during the opening week would be entitled to a five per cent. discount. The five per cent. discount for cash purchases that week, and the prospect of securing trading stamps in the future, which the other small groceries did not offer, had considerable effect on them. And it produced a similar effect on many others, too. The Stahls had not moved their personal effects away, as they had not secured a place, and so Hal had his dinner with Mrs. Stahl as usual. He learned that the Dutchman was negotiating for a store some blocks away. After the meal Hal went around to the printer's and got the cards he had ordered. Then he remained in the store while Hazel went to her own dinner.

As soon as she got back he started out to visit all of the customers Stahl had lost. In the course of an hour he knocked on Mrs. Finnerty's door. He found her up to her eyes in her weekly wash.

"So ye have bought out that ould Dootchman, I hear?" she said.

"Yes, Mrs. Finnerty, and I shall be glad to have you trade with me," said Hal.

"Sure I'll do that wid all the pleasure in the wuruld, but yez'll have to trust me, for me man is laid up in the hospital wid a broken arm, and I dunno when he'll be after gettin' out. It's little money I have left, and it's afeard I am I won't be able to meet me rint, but the landlord, I'm thankful to say, isn't flinty-hearted like some of thim cormorants, and he'll give me toime," she said.

"I will certainly trust you, Mrs. Finnerty, for I know you're an honest woman," replied Hal. "You've got to live, and your two small kiddies have got to eat. It's too bad your husband is laid up, but such things happen sometimes. I haven't a whole lot of capital, Mrs. Finnerty, and I can't afford to make a practice of trusting my customers over a week. I mean those who can pay. Now in your case I will make an exception. I am willing to help you as far as it's possible for me to do so. I am sure that's a fair proposition."

"Faith, it is. I ought to know you'd trate me dacint. Didn't you lind some of your own money

to the Mulcaheys, and to the O'Briens, whin they were so hard pushed they didn't know which way to turn? Ah! it's a foine, ginerous b'y yez are, an' may yez have good luck. Ye won't lose nothin' through me. The bill I owe the store I'll pay in good toime, wid all the rist of it. If I had the money I'd pay yez this blessid minute."

"The bill you owe the store you will settle with Mr. Stahl, as he collects all accounts due up to last night. You'll owe me whatever you buy from this on, and you can pay when you're able."

Hal met with success pretty nearly everywhere he went among the old customers, and he left his card under the doors of those people he didn't know. He found that Hazel had done quite a bit of business, and the cash drawer looked promising. Mrs. Stahl had come out and helped her for a while, as Hal had asked her to, and so he was well satisfid with the outlook. He lost no time in filling the orders he had taken on his round, and his stock was so low that in some cases he had to stop and open a box to get what he wanted.

He met Mr. Stahl at supper and the Dutchman told him he had bought the store he was after and would move into it in a day or two. It was a larger one than the shop he had sold to Hal, and catered to a middle class of people. Stocks, fixtures and good-will cost him \$2,000, which he considered cheap, and he paid half cash, getting ten months' time on the balance. The owner had lost his wife and wanted to return to Germany.

"Vell, I hear from mine vife dot you done porty well to-day," said Stahl to Hal.

"Yes, I've made a good start, and I've got a fine helper in Miss Price."

"Miss Brice—dot's der gal you vos sved on, ain't id?"

"Who said I was?" replied Hal, with a flush.

"Nobody said so, but she used to make some excuses to come in here all der times yust to haf a talk mid you. I could seen mit half an eye dot you vos stuck on her. Vell, you needn't look mad apoud id. She's a purty nice gal, I dink. You better marry her purty soon und den you safe der yages you paid her. Dot's der vay I done mit mine vife, und I make money py id."

"I wouldn't told dot around off I vos you," put in Mrs. Stahl, looking displeased at her husband's frankness.

"Vot diff'rence dot make, Katrina? Business is business. Vot's yours is mine, ain'd id? By und by ve sold oud for good und go py Yermany, where ve live midoud vorking on der fat off der land. Yaw, I ped you."

After supper Hal delivered all his orders and got back in time to close up. There was a bunch of work before him that would keep him up late. First he counted his cash and put it in the safe. Then he opened a new ledger, for Stahl had taken charge of his own books, in order to settle all his accounts and collect what was due him. As soon as he had straightened out his accounts, and locked his money and books in the safe, he started in to open the goods that had arrived that morning and place some of them on the shelves, leaving the other boxes with their covers off in different parts of the store. Then he wound up his alarm clock and went to bed, thoroughly tired out.

CHAPTER VI.—Hal and the Finnerty Crowd.

Hal was up at five and swept out the store. Then he started for the stable where the horse and wagon were kept, the purchase of which was a separate transaction, and wholly on credit, harnessed it up himself, and went on to the market a few blocks away, down on the river, for his day's supply of vegetables and fruit that was in season. He was back at seven, opened the store to the public, laid out his green stuff and fruit in front, and had everything ready when Hazel arrived at a quarter of eight.

Leaving her in charge, he went in to breakfast. After the meal he waited on customers and took orders until it was time to start out on his morning round, making deliveries and taking orders. Jake Stahl went away early to look after the transfer of his new store and attend to other matters. As Hal was getting in his wagon several members of the Finnerty gang came up and asked him if he had any more circulars to distribute.

"No; but I shall probably get out some new ones on Saturday," replied Hal.

"Do we get the job of putting 'em around?" asked the spokesman of the bunch.

"Sure. You fellows shall have the first call on anything I have to give out in that line."

"We've been tellin' de people to trade wit' yer," spoke up another. "Anyt'ing in dat for us?"

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Here is a bunch of my cards. Each of you take a few and put your names on the back. Every person who calls at the store with one of those cards and says you recommended her to buy regularly will entitle the boy, whose name is on the back, to a nickel commission. How is that?"

"Fine!" shouted the bunch.

"That's not all you'll make. As long as your customer buys of me and pays up promptly you'll be entitled to another nickel every week."

"Oh, come off; you don't mean that," said one of the boys incredulously.

"I do mean it. It will pay me to encourage you to bring me in custom. You know lots of people around here who have never bought at this store. Get as many of them as you can and gather in the nickels. Suppose you each secure ten steady customers for me. You can come in here every Saturday about five and collect fifty cents all around. That ought to supply you with the price of amusement."

The scheme hit the boys in great shape, and off they started with a vim to hunt up customers for Hal's grocery store. Hal drove off, chuckling. The plan was a new one, and he never would have thought of it but for the remark the second boy made. He knew that the rest of the Finnerty gang would be buzzing him for some of his business cards as soon as the news circulated among them. It was good policy for him to keep on friendly terms with the tough crowd, for the store was right in their neighborhood, and as their parents stood by them, their good-will was better than any amount of police protection, as had been demonstrated in Mr. Stahl's case.

When he returned to the store, Hal told Hazel about his bargain with the boys. She laughed.

"There were two of them in here a little while ago, asking for you. I told them you were out and they said they'd be back," said the girl.

Two customers came in to buy groceries.

"Are you going to give away trading stamps after this week?" asked one.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Hal.

"Then I shall trade here if you have what I want."

"If I haven't got it on hand, I'll get it for you. It is my aim to accommodate those who honor me with their custom."

"Then you ought to succeed. You look young to be the owner of a store."

"Maybe I'm older than I look."

"You don't look over eighteen."

Hal smiled, for that was his age.

"Do you give the stamps on weekly accounts?" continued the lady.

"No; only on cash sales. I have to pay so much a thousand for the stamps, and as they are a present to the customer, the purpose I aim at is to increase the cash sales of the store."

"But if you trust people for a week and they come in and pay promptly, why shouldn't they be entitled to the stamps?"

"No one is entitled to the stamps. It is simply a free offering made for a purpose—to encourage buyers to pay cash when they order. A person who pays for what they get when they get it has no weekly account staring them in the face, so you see it is an advantage all around."

"Well, I am collecting stamps and I want them so I will pay when I buy. I want some things now. You are allowing five per cent. off for cash this week?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You don't charge more than the other stores, do you?"

"I don't think so, as my prices on groceries are the standard ones. Of course, on butter, eggs and such things the price is constantly fluctuating, and some grocers will be higher one time and lower another than their business rivals. Then I intend to run a special once or twice a week. That means a certain article will be offered at a bargain then. For instance, I have a sign outside which states that I am selling twelve eggs for a quarter. They're not my best eggs, but they are what I usually sell at about thirty cents. That is what the other grocers are asking for them. Those who buy those eggs while I am offering them for a quarter will save five cents on them."

"Yes, yes, I understand," said the lady, who then gave her order, amounting to \$2, on which she got a rebate of ten cents for cash.

"Your order will be delivered this afternoon, unless you must have the goods right away," said Hal.

"Any time to-day will do," she said, taking her departure.

As the news spread about the reduced price for the eggs, many women called specially for them, and Hal sold many dozen. As a matter of fact, they were a special lot of eggs he had picked up at a discount, and he did not guarantee them. They were offered as long as they lasted, and they went off in two days. Hal made a good thing out of them at a quarter a dozen. They also helped to sell his better eggs, for many per-

sons who came for them, on finding they were not warranted, bought the thirty-five-cent eggs.

As it was practically a poor neighborhood, the women were glad to get them for a quarter. Hal's butter was not a first-class article, for the customers that came to him could not afford the best creamery prices. He carried three grades of it, the best being second rate. He had to cater to the trade he could get, and that fact governed his method of doing business. He found, however, that the Finnerty crowd had distributed many of his circulars outside of the poor zone, and some people in moderate circumstances, living on the fringe of his district, called to see what he had in the grocery line, for the promise of trading stamps, which heretofore had not been given away in that locality, had its effect.

Mr. Stahl didn't believe in giving anything away for nothing, even to catch trade, and told Hal he was foolish to offer stamps. The boy disagreed with him. He believed in the principle of large sales at smaller profits, and told the Dutchman so.

"Dot's all right, put der more pusiness you done der larger vill peen your oxpenses. Maype you forgot dot. Der oxpenses vill ead up der small profits und where vill you come oud?" said Mr. Stahl.

"I will keep my expenses as low as I can. I am sure the more customers I have the more money I'll make."

Hal wondered what Stahl would have said had he known that he had engaged to pay the members of the Finnerty crowd five cents a week bonus on every customer they steered to his store who remained with him.

"He'd say I was crazy; but I think there is method in my madness," he said to himself.

The Dutchman and his wife moved away on Friday, and then Hal had to eat at a near-by restaurant for a while. Hazel had already looked at the two rooms and told him she and her mother would take them and board him. It would be much more convenient for her to be on the spot, she said.

"You really need me around all the time, Hal," she said, "and I have no doubt mother would be willing to help a little. We are both interested in your success."

"I don't know what I should do without you, Hazel," he replied. "I had to have somebody I could trust in the store from the start. You are a regular prize package, and if I succeed I shall feel that a good part of my success is due to you."

Hal notified the landlord that the rooms were vacant and ready to be painted and kalsomined, and next day two men came around with their materials and fixed the rooms up in short order. About the middle of the following week Hazel and her mother moved their small stock of furniture in, and they found that the two rooms answered their purposes. They had no rent to pay now, and Hal charged Mrs. Price only the cost price for the groceries and other things she got from the store.

The Finnerty crowd sent in some thirty customers altogether to Hal, and as they all proved steady, good-paying ones, he divided \$1.50 every Saturday afternoon among the lads. He also employed them occasionally to deliver circulars

for him, and he found that they really put them around and did not throw them down the sewer holes, as some circular distributors have been known to do. Many of the Finnerty customers Hal would have got anyway, but he didn't mind that, since he had made himself solid with the gang, and had he asked them to upset the signs, or other wise annoy any of his business rivals they certainly would have done it to oblige him; but, of course, Hal wouldn't think of such a thing.

Some of the money the crowd got from Hal they expended in cheap literature, and the rest in visiting moving picture shows, which had a great attraction for them. Their rendezvous was the cellar of the Finnerty tenement, and the tenants of the first floor often heard them raising Cain down there. Among themselves they were still known as the "Red Avengers," but to the people of the neighborhood and the police they were known as the "Holy Terrors."

Two of them were caught stealing plumbing from a vacant store and were sent to the workhouse for a year. One of these had sent two customers to Hal, and so the grocery lad put ten cents a week away for him, the sum total to be paid to him when he got out. So the first month of Hal's business venture passed away and found him doing fifty per cent. more business than Stahl had done at the time his trade was at its best. He met all his bills promptly and gained the confidence of his wholesaler, and such other merchants as extended thirty days' trust to him.

During the whole of that time he supplied Mrs. Finnerty with groceries and vegetables, rendering her a weekly statement, but not asking her for money. Then Mr. Finnerty was discharged from the hospital and went back to his job on the river front, and when he got his pay envelope on Saturday his wife took care to be on hand to get it before the money found its way behind the bar of one of the many saloons in the vicinity. She marched straight to Hal's store and paid a third of her bill, promising to still further reduce the account on the following Saturday.

CHAPTER VII.—Hazel Shows Her Nerve.

Hal found it necessary, with his increasing trade, to hire a stout boy to help around the store and make deliveries. Probably one of the Finnerty crowd would have applied for the job had those lads learned of his intention, but Hal didn't want any of them around the store. He advertised in the Dexter morning *Argus* and got a number of replies. He picked one of them out, sent for the writer, and, after an interview, hired him.

He was a husky lad, almost as big as Hal himself, and his name was Oliver Owens. He did well from the start, and Hal was beginning to like him first rate, when something happened that brought his career at the store to a sudden termination. It was half-past twelve one day and Hazel was eating her dinner. There were no customers in the store, and Hal, who was arranging some of his stock behind a pile of boxes, heard the click of the cash drawer. He looked toward the counter and saw his young assistant

reaching over the counter. Behind him was a basket full of packages he had set down on the floor.

It didn't take Hal but a second to understand what Oliver Owens was up to. The grocer's boy was pulling money out of the till when Hal sprang toward him and grasped his wrist. Hazel came in at that moment and saw what was happening.

"You thief! I've caught you!" cried Hal, in angry tones.

Oliver struggled to escape, but the young groceryman held tight hold of him.

"What have you got to say for yourself, you young rascal?" said Hal, pulling him around.

"I wasn't going to steal your money. I just wanted to borrow a quarter," replied the assistant sulkily.

"That won't go with me. You had no right to touch the money drawer under any circumstances. If you really wanted to borrow a quarter, all you had to do was to ask me for it and you would have got it. You have forfeited my confidence and you'll have to quit the store. I won't have any one around here I cannot trust. Take off your apron. Hand him his week's wages, Hazel."

The girl counted out his money and shoved it toward him.

"Now you can get out," said Hal, and then Oliver Owens picked up his money and left without another word.

"I'm afraid that's a bad place to keep our cash drawer," said Hal. "Stahl always used the drawer of his desk, which is partially screened in. I had it put under the counter for convenience, to save us going to the desk. It will have to go back, for any one could reach across the counter and grab a fistful of bills. On Saturday I think I had better have a cashier—some little girl who has had some experience in taking money and giving change. Maybe you know somebody we could get."

"I think I do," said Hazel.

"Very well; I will leave the matter with you."

He took the cash drawer out of the grooves he had made to slide it on and put it back in the place where it belonged, while Hazel went to wait on a woman who had just entered the store. That afternoon, when business was slack and Hal was out making deliveries, two men entered the place. Hazel was at the desk making entries in the ledger. She started forward, but one of the men said:

"Don't move. I've got a bill to collect."

He walked up to the little window in the brass screen around the desk. The other man hung back and leaned on the counter.

"Where's your bill?" asked Hazel.

"Here it is," said the man, showing the muzzle of a revolver through the hole. "If you utter a word, I'll shoot you!" He added menacingly.

As he spoke, his companion leaned over the counter and felt for the cash drawer where it had been prior to young Oliver's attempt on it. Needless to say, he failed to find it. With a muttered imprecation he started to go around the end of the counter. Hazel was only a little girl, but she was full of nerve and pluck. She uttered a gasp when she saw the muzzle of the revolver and heard the man's threat. She realized at once that the men had come there to rob the store. As

it was broad daylight, the people were passing and re-passing all the time, while a customer might enter at any moment, the job would have to be done on the fly to be successful. Hazel felt as much interest in the store as if it belonged to her.

She knew that Hal could ill afford, with his small capital, to suffer the loss of his day's receipts up to that point. Anyway, she felt it was her duty to defend the money even at the risk of her life, and she determined to do it. She saw the second man coming around the counter and thought he was aiming for the cash drawer before her. Disregarding the pointed revolver, she reached under the desk and took hold of the revolver Hal kept there on the shelf at full cock. The man who came around the counter pulled out the twine drawer, saw his mistake, looked for the drawer he had in mind, and, seeing by the empty grooves that it had been removed, started toward the girl.

Hazel raised the revolver and fired at him. He staggered back with a cry, shot through the arm. Hazel then shoved her smoking weapon at the other man. Her nerve carried the day. The fellow, who had no intention of shooting her, his purpose being simply intimidation, withdrew his gun and started for the door. The girl might easily have shot him, but she let him go. She was satisfied with having saved the cash. The other man, with the blood running down his arm, hurried after his pal, and both ran out of the store and people, attracted by the shot, began to stop and look in.

A man from next door, who had heard the report, rushed in to see what had happened, and the crowd outside grew bigger. Hazel never moved from her seat, but sat there holding the revolver in her fingers. Her startled mother and the man arrived about the same time.

"What was the shooting about, miss?" asked the man.

Hazel looked a bit white and she was trembling from the reaction.

"I shot a man who tried to rob the store," she said, in trembling tones.

"Where is he?" said the man from next door, looking around.

"There were two of them, and they both ran out together."

"Then I guess you didn't hurt him much. So two men tried to rob you? Where is Hardy?"

"He's out delivering goods. Our boy was discharged this morning. Will you please ask the people outside to move away?"

"Certainly. I'll tell them the pistol went off by accident."

He went to the door and explained that a loaded revolver in the store went off accidentally and that nothing was wrong.

"Move on, ladies and gentlemen, and don't block the entrance. There is really nothing to attract your notice," he called.

The crowd began to melt away, though fresh accessions kept the man on guard for several minutes. It was some little time before Hazel recovered her ordinary composure. She had been brave enough under fire, but when she thought of what might have happened if the rascal had pulled the trigger, her nerves shook. More than an hour elapsed before Hal got back, and then she told him the story. He was astor-

ished at the nerve of the men entering the store in broad daylight, in such a thickly populated district, and he was not a little surprised at Hazel's pluck in standing them off and saving his cash.

"You're a brave little girl, Hazel, and I appreciate your devotion to my interests; but I'd rather have lost the money, even if it was the last cent I possessed, than have had any harm come to you," he told her.

"Well, nothing happened to me," she said, with a half smile.

"Because they did not expect you to put up such a bold front. The man with the gun figured that you would collapse when he threatened you with it, and that his pal would have an easy job getting away with the cash. You did the right thing to take the bull by the horns and shoot quick, for such a course took the rascals right off their feet. They knew the game was up, then and there, as the report would bring a crowd, and probably a policeman. How did you get out of the scrape?"

Hazel explained.

"Then no policeman has been here to make inquiries?"

"No."

"I'll have to notify the station house and report the facts, with a description of the rascals."

He went to the telephone and was soon in communication with the desk sergeant. In this way the story got into the newspapers and the people of the neighborhood learned what really happened.

CHAPTER VIII.—A Speculation in Oranges.

The next time Hal called on his wholesaler he went in his wagon to get the goods himself, as he did not need as much stock as he purchased at first, for he did not allow himself to run down, like Stahl had done as soon as he had fully decided to sell out. He made a satisfactory payment on his account, bought what he needed, had it loaded on his wagon, and started back. He had secured another boy to make deliveries and help around the store, and with Hazel in charge of things he felt no anxiety about how things were going on while he was away. He thought he would stop and give his late boss a call. The Dutchman's new store bore his old sign over the door, lengthened out to fit, and bearing the added words, "Fine Groceries."

On the windows Stahl had placed his name where his predecessor's had been. He now dealt in wines and liquors as well as groceries. When Hal entered the store he saw that his late boss employed two assistants. The Dutchman was at his desk and Hal walked up to the little window.

"How do you do, Mr. Stahl!" he said pleasantly.

"Vell, vell, so dot's you, Hally! Shake!" and the groceryman thrust his fat fist through the window.

Hal shook.

"How is Mrs. Stahl?" he asked.

"Yust der same as ever. She vos speaking apoud you dis mornings. She vill be glad to seen you. Go by dot liddle door und you vill found her. How are you making oud?"

"First rate. I've brought you \$50 more on account."

"Good poy! I gif you a receipt. You vill soon paid me all up. You vos smarder at der business den I took you for. How apoud dem pad boys? Do dey gif you some troubles like dey done me?"

"No. They never bother me."

"Der police fix dem, I guess. How many off der old customers you got pack?"

"Nearly all of them."

"You don'd told me!"

"And as many new ones. I am doing half again as much business as you did there."

"Is dot possible! How you manage dot?"

"Well, I'm giving away trading stamps, for one thing."

"You dink dot pays?" said the Dutchman doubtfully.

"I think it does. Only spot cash customers get them. For that reason I'm doing a large cash business."

"Der cash business is der pest. Den you don't lose noddings."

"I consider it worth the cost of the trading stamps. I don't have so much bookkeeping to do, and the risk of bad debts is lessened. Some of my customers are not able to pay cash. I let them run one and two weeks. I trusted Mrs. Finerty four weeks when she didn't have a cent."

"You trust dot vomans four veeks?" exclaimed Stahl. "Vot a foolishness! You vill got skinned oud off efery cent."

"I'll risk that. Her husband has been out of the hospital two weeks now, and she is paying up."

"For vhy she don'd pay me, den? She owes a pill more as two months. When I call to seen her und ask for mine money she insulted me. She said she paid me von off dose days when she got goot und ready, und off I come 'round one times more she would hit me mit a brooms. She vos a loafer like dot poy off hers. It would be no goot dot I sue her for she got noddings."

"Well, she's sore on you, and so is Mrs. Moran, for sending their sons to the workhouse."

"Vell, dey didn't get more as vos coming to dem."

Hal had no more time to spare, so after a hurried visit to Mrs. Stahl, who gave him a warm welcome, he jumped on his wagon and drove off. Next morning, when he went to market, he found a farmer there with a load of apples which he had kept over from the preceding fall in the hope of getting a better price for them, but he found he had miscalculated the market. As they were not first-class apples, nobody seemed to want them, although he lowered his price by degrees. He was offering them by the bushel. Only grocerymen from Hal's neighborhood would take them at any price. Hal having bought his supply of vegetables and fruit for the day, stopped and looked at the apples. The farmer had about come to the conclusion that he was badly stuck.

"How much are you asking a bushel?" asked Hal.

"How many bushels do you want?" asked the farmer.

"I don't know that I want any. I might buy if you make it an object."

"Well, I've been asking fifty cents a bushel.

"I'll let you have them for forty. If you take six bushels, I'll let them go for thirty."

"How many bushels have you got altogether?"

"I brought in twenty, and I've sold eight."

"I'll give you three dollars for the rest."

"I'll take you, though it's like giving them away. How are you going to carry them? Your wagon is pretty full."

"You must deliver them at my store."

"Where is your store?"

"Four blocks from here."

"I'll do it," said the farmer, glad to finish up an unprofitable business.

"Drop in behind me, then. I'm going right to my place," said Hal.

So the farmer accompanied Hal to his store, which was not yet open to the public. The young groceryman opened up, and then going down into his cellar, he brought up about every box he had, of all shapes and sizes, and the farmer filled them with apples. The rest were dumped into two empty sugar barrels and then Hal paid the man the \$3. About this time his boy assistant appeared and Hal told him to carry the boxes of apples into the cellar. One of the barrels was left outside and the other taken into the store. After Hal and the boy had laid out the fruit and vegetables, the young grocer printed a big sign, reading as follows:

"Apples almost given away. Special for today. Fresh apples from the country, 3 cents a quart measure. Two quarts for 5 cents. Six quarts for 13 cents. The greatest bargain of the year. Don't miss it!"

As a bushel produced thirty-two quarts, and Hal had only paid 25 cents a bushel for the apples, he expected to double his investment on the sale. The other grocerymen in the district had bought one or two bushels each, and had paid at the rate of 50 cents a bushel for them, so they were asking 5 cents a quart, straight.

Before Hal went in to breakfast a couple of the Finnerty gang came along, and the young grocer gave them 10 cents each to spread the news of the apple sale through the tenements. The result of this was that during the morning a crowd of women came to the store with baskets to buy apples, and Hal did a land-office business. People who seldom or never bought of him called for apples, and some of them bought other things as well. There were more apple barrels, apples and apple dumplings sold in the district during the next two or three days than ever before in the same time.

As a result, Hal made about \$7 profit off his \$3 investment, and the people had a surplus of apples for a while. On Saturday morning, Hal asked for another bargain at the market. A boatload of oranges had come up the river. A portion of the cargo was landed and went off at the current rate. The balance were to be carried on to the next town. An accident had happened to the boat, and the man in charge of the cargo decided to sell the balance of the cargo at the best price he could get for them. Hal thought he saw a speculation in this, and he bought the whole lot for a second price, a price of about \$100. He got the first forty per cent of the whole sale price.

As the boat was certain to remain at the wharf until Monday, Hal had plenty of time to get the oranges to his store, and there were enough crates to fill his cellar. The oranges retailed for 50 cents a dozen. He could afford to sell them for 30 cents. He could also make money by selling them wholesale at 28 cents, which was 7 cents less than the wholesale price paid by other dealers that morning. He telephoned Stahl that he had a lot of fine oranges he would sell him at so much a crate, equivalent to 28 cents a dozen. The Dutchman said he had all he wanted. He got similar answers from other dealers. In the meantime he put the oranges on sale at his store at two for five cents, and they went very well at that rate.

During the morning he sent his boy to the boat to bring up his purchase. It took several trips, and by the time he had them all in his cellar the place looked like a warehouse. He called in several of the Finnerty gang and sent them out around the adjoining district with baskets of the oranges and orders to sell them at forty cents. Their commission was to be a nickel on every dozen they sold. The bunch worked steadily at the job in order to get all the nickels they could.

The six engaged sold 100 dozen up to six o'clock when they quit, and they made nearly one dollar apiece. These same lads were also collecting from 15 to 50 cents a week from Hal for customers they had brought him. They considered the young grocer a gold mine to them, and were ready to do anything he wanted at any time, though none of them could be induced to go to work at a regular job. As the oranges cost Hal only twenty-one cents a dozen, he cleared \$14 off the afternoon's work of the six boys. He sold about sixty dozen at the store at the rate of 30 cents, making 9 cents a dozen.

On Sunday afternoon he went over his stock and threw out the bad ones, and laid aside those that would be soft the next day, to be offered at 2 cents each. As Monday was his slowest day in the store, he loaded up the wagon with crates of oranges right after dinner and went out to peddle them around the best residential district at 45 cents a dozen. Whenever he struck a grocery store, he offered them by the crate at 30 cents. In this way he got rid of the rest of his oranges. He cleared a profit of about \$75 on his speculation. This was practically so much extra money to him, and he paid Stahl another \$50 of the balance due him on the store.

Thus the third month passed, and before it was over the Finnerty boy and his pal were duly released from the workhouse, and returned to their stamping grounds, where they were received with open arms by their parents and the gang.

CHAPTER IX.—Dinny Moran Goes to Work for Hal.

Naturally, one of the first things Mike Finnerty and Dinny Moran heard about was the disappearance of the Dutch grocer from the corner. They learned that Stahl had been forced to call out to his clerk, Hal Hardy. The gang told them that Hal was all to the good, and that all of them were making money out of him, either through customers they had brought him, or by

the way to work they executed for him. Mike and Dinny were interested, and the day after their release they called around to see Hal.

"We want yer to give us a show to make something, too," said Mike.

"If you're around when I want something done I'll put you on," replied Hal.

"My old woman told me yer helped her out when the old man was in the hospital. That makes yer solid wit' me, an' if ye're solid wit' me yer all right wit' the gang—see?" said Mike. "Let Dinny and me have the first chance, as we are busted."

Hal promised to do so, and they went away. A few days after that Patrick Moran fell into the hold of a schooner and broke his leg. That landed him in the hospital, and Mrs. Moran saw hard times ahead of her. Dinny, her son, rushed around to see if Hal wouldn't find something for him to do. It happened that Hal's boy had failed to show up that morning.

"Can you drive a wagon?" he asked Dinny.

"Sure I kin," said Dinny confidently.

"Well, I can give you work to-day delivering groceries if you want to take it, but you'll have to work steady all day up to eight to-night," said Hal, who had his doubts about the lad caring to put in a whole day at any kind of work.

The authorities of the workhouse, however, had broken both Dinny and Mike to harness, and, though they did not like work a bit more than they ever did, they had got used to keeping at a job when they found they had to. In the case of Dinny that morning, he had developed a sudden ambition to help his mother now that his father was laid up.

"I'll work steady if yer'll take me on. Has yer boy left, or did yer fire him? If you'll give me the job, I'd do the right thing, honest I will," said Dinny, with some earnestness.

"My boy hasn't showed up to-day, and I suppose he's sick," said Hal. "He may be back to-morrow, so I can only promise you a day's work. I'll pay you seventy-five cents to-night, but I hope you'll give it to your mother."

"Sure I will. I didn't ask for the job for myself."

"Well, take off your jacket and put on that apron. Then carry those boxes and baskets out and load them into the wagon."

When everything was on the wagon Hal said he would accompany Dinny on the trip to see how he could drive. Dinny proved he could drive, all right. Hal remained in the wagon while Dinny carried the stuff upstairs to the customers, for none of the tenements had dumb-elevators. After satisfying himself that Dinny was able to fill the bill if he kept his mind on business, Hal left him to finish the route and walked back to the store. Before leaving Dinny, he told him that he mustn't let any of the gang jump on the wagon and take a free ride.

"If I find you do well, and my regular boy remains away for good, I'll give you his place and then you'll be able to help your mother right along," Hal said.

"I'll do ther right thing, bet yer life! I'm tired of hangin' around wit' the gang. There's not'in' in it. Me mother told me I must go to work, anyway, or we wouldn't have not'in' to eat."

"I'm glad to hear that you are thinking of

becoming useful. I'll help you all I can. The whole of your crowd ought to look for regular jobs, too, and not depend on the little I put in their way."

"Oh, they're lazy, and like to be their own bosses. They don't mind workin' once in a while to keep in cash, but that's their limit."

"How about Mike? Isn't he going to turn over a new leaf like yourself?"

"I dunno. He's as bad as the rest."

"Why doesn't his father make him go to work?"

"I couldn't tell yer that, either."

"Well, you stick to steady work as soon as you get it and you'll find yourself a whole lot better off."

Here Hal left him with the wagon. Half an hour later Dinny returned and reported having made the deliveries all right. Hal put him to work around the store. Shortly afterward Mrs. Finnerty came around to buy something. When she saw Dinny busy with an apron on, she raised her hands in astonishment.

"For the love of hivin! Have yez really gone to wurruk, Dinny?" she asked.

"Bet yer life I have!" grinned Dinny.

"Sure, wonders'll never cease. It'll be good news for your mother, but mebbe she knows all about it."

"I haven't told her. I only caught on an hour ago."

"Well, -well; I'll break the news aisy to her whin I get back. It's such a strange thing for yez to do any wurruk that she'll hardly belave me on me oath. Is it a stiddy job yez have here?"

"I wish it was. I'm only on for the day."

"Sure that's too bad, and your father in the hospital wid a broken leg. Oh, well, mebbe yez'll get somethin' else in a few days. Mister Hardy is a gintleman to give yez a lift, anyway. He's always doin' some dacint thing for us poor folks. I shan't soon forgit what he done for me."

"Can I sell you anythin', Mrs. Finnerty?" said Dinny.

"Are yez a salesman, too? What is the price of thim praties to-day?"

Dinny told her.

"Yez may give me a quart."

He got a paper bag and dumped the measure into it.

"What else, Mrs. Finnerty?"

The longshoreman's wife indicated several other things she wanted, and Dinny got them for her.

"Are they to be charged?" he said.

"Yis. I've a standin' account wid Mr. Hardy."

Dinny noted down the things, with the price, and turned the ticket in to Hazel, who looked at it and then put it in a file. That afternoon Hal's regular boy came to the store and told him he had got another job that he liked better, so he was going to give up the grocery business.

"All right," said Hal. "As you're leaving of your own accord, I'll pay you for the four days you've worked. Come over to the desk."

Hal made out a receipt for the amount and told the boy to sign it. Dinny was out at the time on the wagon. Hal decided not to engage his new assistant until he saw how he behaved himself next day, which was Saturday and the busiest one of the week. When it came time to close the

store he told the boy he wouldn't pay him till the following night, as he expected him to work next day.

"I like the place first rate, Mister Hardy. I wish I could stay," said Dinny.

"Perhaps I may be able to keep you. It all depends on how you conduct yourself. If you work here you've got to attend to business, same as you have done to-day. If you are satisfied to do that, and make good, it's likely I'll give you steady work. That will take you off the streets and make a man of you; and it will help your mother at a time when she needs help."

"Jest give me the chance and I'll make good, bet yer life," said Dinny, in a tone that indicated that he meant what he said.

"Well, I'll see how you do to-morrow. It's a long day. You'll have to stay till eleven o'clock, and maybe a little after. You won't be able to go to a show with your crowd, if they go. Think the matter all out and let me know to-morrow night when I pay you whether you want to work here steady or not."

Dinny had been home to his dinner, and had told his mother he liked to work for Hal Hardy. When he returned for his late supper, after eight, he told his mother that he had a chance of a steady job at the grocery store.

"Then, for Heaven's sake, take it, for we need the money. Your father is in the hospital and won't be able to go to work for a month or more. Whatever ye can earn in the meantime will help keep the wolf from the door. It's time ye shook that gang ye've been runnin' with. Ye got three months in the workhouse on account of your di-does, and your father told me if ye didn't mind your ways he'd have you sint back for six more. Ye couldn't find a better boss to work for than Mister Hardy. He's a gentleman, every inch of him. It'll be your own fault if ye don't please him."

Dinny assured his mother that he intended to do his best at the store, and he went to work at a quarter past seven next morning with that purpose in view. Being a busy and a long day, it was a good test he was put to, but he stood it like a little major and Hal was well pleased with his exertions. The only thing Hal was afraid of was that when the job had ceased to be a novelty with Dinny he was slack up and grow lazy. He had to chance that, however, and so when he paid the lad off that night, late, he asked him if he wanted to stay under the conditions he would have to face. Dinny said he would stay, and so Hal told him what his wages would be, and instructed him to report at a quarter past seven Monday morning. By this time the Finnerty crowd knew that Dinny was working for Hal Hardy, and they supposed it was only a temporary job. Next morning, when he met some of them on the sidewalk, he told them he had got a steady job.

"Ye'd get sick of workin' steady, Dinny," said one, with a grin.

"No, I won't," said Dinny. "I like it first rate."

"Yer only tink yer do," said another. "Yer've got to work Saturday night, and dat's de night we have our best times."

"Can't help it," replied Dinny. "Me mother needs the mon, and I've got to hustle. If I don't,

me old man will have me sent back to the work-house."

"Did he say that?"

"Me mudder said he did."

That morning Mike Finnerty had a run-in with his father and got a terrible thumping. He could be heard yelling for half a block.

"Now, thin, ye'll go to wurruk, do ye mind, er be hivins, I won't lave a whole bone in yer body. If ye haven't a job by to-morrow night whin I come home from the docks, look out. It's another latherin' I'll be after givin' yer. And ivery night ye'll get the same till ye get busy. Take pattern after Dinny Moran. He's gone to wurruk to help his mother, as he should do. Now ye'll do the same, or ye know what'll happen to ye."

Having delivered that ultimatum, Mr. Finnerty sat down to finish reading his Sunday paper. If he had taken the bull by the horns a year before, his son wouldn't have been the young rowdy he was. However, it was better late than never, and with his workhouse experience Mike stood some chance of reformation.

He knew his father meant business this time, and the only way he could escape certain punishment was to go to work or run away. Under the sting of the lashing he had received his intention was to do the latter, but after a consultation with his friend Dinny, he concluded to look for a job next morning. As it happened, the printer in the next block wanted a boy; Mike applied for it, and was taken on as errand boy and printer's devil. Thus he escaped a second whaling that his father intended giving him.

CHAPTER X.—Hal Has a Strenuous Experience.

Hal's progressive methods were carving out success for him in his little store, and he was already reaching out for customers outside his immediate zone. He did this at first by means of circulars, surrounded by a border of fac-simile trading stamps. These stamps, never having been given out in that vicinity, proved a potent drawing card. His rivals in the district, finding they were losing customers every day because people were attracted to Hal's store by trading stamps, started in to give away stamps themselves, though they hated to do it.

They couldn't see all the advantages of the system, but they saw that it cost them a \$5 bill for a book of stamps. Their feelings toward Hal were not pleasant, and they made no secret of the matter. Several of them came together to see if Hal couldn't be forced out of the neighborhood as they knew Jake Stahl had been. They sounded the members of the Finnerty gang, but none of those lads would agree to wage warfare on the little corner grocery where Dinny was employed. They merely passed the tip to Dinny that the other grocers were going to make trouble for his boss, and told him to warn Hal Hardy, which Dinny did. Hal laughed.

"I know they're sore on me, Dinny," he said. "I've captured a good many of their customers. I don't see how they can injure me by fair means, and if they try any other kind, they may look out for trouble."

"Yer needn't be afraid that the fellers will do

"anythin' to yer, for they won't," said Dinny. "They're yer friends."

"They ought to be. Seven of them are drawing from half a dollar down from me every Saturday night, and the others have worked for me off and on."

"That's right. Don't worry; you're solid with them. Them guys that are tryin' to put somethin' up on yer had better look out themselves. First thing they know they'll have the gang after them," said Dinny.

Hal was always up at five, for it was necessary for him to get to the market early. This was no hardship at that time, for it was summer, and broad daylight before five. Two or three mornings later, while Hal was buying farm stuff, he noticed that a couple of rough fellows were watching him. He observed that they followed him as he led his rig around. He began to suspect they were up to some mischief, so he kept a sharp eye out without appearing to do so. When he had purchased all he needed that day, he got up on the seat to drive to the store. Then it was that the two men closed in on him. One sprang on after him and gave him a shove to the left of the seat.

The other man was on the other side of the wagon, and he grabbed Hal and pulled him out of the wagon, then he sprang on the seat himself. The first chap had the reins in his hand waiting for him. As soon as the second one got in he whipped up the horse and the wagon started off at a smart pace. Hal was on his feet and after his team in a moment, but was outdistanced by the rascals, one of whom looked behind and gave him the laugh. The young grocer, however, didn't mean to let them get away with his property if he could help it, and kept up the chase.

In their eagerness to get away, they ran into another grocer's wagon, and smashed the hind wheel of that wagon, which happened to be owned by one of Hal's business rivals. The wagon tipped and spilled a large part of its contents into the street. The two men whipped up and went on, but the accident enabled Hal to close up on them, and he succeeded in catching on behind and was whirled up the street. The grocer whose wagon had been demoralized saw Hal Hardy's name painted on it and he made a note of the fact.

"I'll make him pay heavy damages for this!" he said to himself, as he began picking up his scattered stock, which was not improved by contact with the dirty street.

Hal was carried for several blocks, hanging on behind, at a merry clip, and then the wagon had to slow down on account of several trucks passing down the cross thoroughfare. Hal took advantage of this to clamber up and secure a foothold in the back of the wagon. The men were occupied with what was going on in front and did not notice him. The last thing Hal had bought was a barrel of potatoes from a farmer. They were covered over the top with a piece of burlap. Hal whipped out his knife and slit the burlap open. Then, as the wagon started on again, he took aim at the ear of the driver and let a large potato drive at him. As it went like a bullet to the fact, it landed with stunning effect under the fellow's ear, splatting open. The rascal

pitched forward, sideways, and landed, senseless, in the street. A second potato caught the other chap on the upper part of the cheek, and he felt as if he had been hit by a stone. With an imprecation, he rose and looked back just as Hal landed his third potato, which hit him squarely between the eyes.

He staggered to the footboard, and half slipped, half fell off. The horse had in the meanwhile come to a stop. Hal jumped down, ran forward, secured the hanging reins, sprang up on the seat and drove away down the next street, and so around back of his store. He had lost about half an hour, and found that Hazel had opened the store and admitted Dinny, who was now busy getting the boxes and boards out of the cellar to make the outside stands with. Hal told Dinny about his adventure as they unloaded the wagon. Later on he told Hazel.

"I had a narrow squeak in saving my wagon and the stuff that was in it," he said. "I must notify the police."

This he did, and furnished such a good description of the rascals that both were arrested that afternoon. About nine o'clock the grocer whose wagon and stock had been damaged called on Hal. He gave the young grocer a big calling down, and then demanded \$75 damages.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Schmidt, but I'm not responsible for your loss," said Hal, in his pleasant way.

"Not responsible! I'll bet you are!" roared Schmidt. "I can swear it was your wagon ran into me. Pay me now, or I'll sue you."

"You'll have to sue, I'm afraid, for I shall not pay you a cent. It was my wagon, but I was not in it. Two men who stole it from me ran into you as they were trying to make their escape."

"That won't go down with me. I don't believe it."

"Very well. I won't argue the matter."

"Are you going to settle with me?"

"Decidedly not."

"Then I'll sue you, and you'll pay costs as well as the bill, and interest, too."

"If a jury says I must pay, I suppose I'll have to, but otherwise I won't."

Schmidt shook his fist at him and rushed off to consult a cheap lawyer. Hal, understanding that the grocer meant business, left the store to secure evidence in his own behalf. He went down to the market and found three dealers who had seen the men throw him off his wagon and drive off with it. He went to the place where he recaptured his wagon and found two storekeepers who had seen the rascals fall off the wagon, and had helped pick one of them up. He took their names and business addresses and returned to his store. About the middle of the afternoon a policeman called to tell him that the rascals had been arrested, and he was wanted at the station-house to identify them. He went there and picked them out of a line of men. He was told to appear against them at the police court next morning.

As Hal was starting for the court he was served with papers by the clerk of the lawyer hired by Grocer Schmidt. He found he was up against a \$75 suit. He laughed, put the papers in his pocket and went to the police court, where he testified against the two rascals who were held for trial.

on the charge of stealing his rig and the contents of the wagon. Then he hunted up a lawyer and hired him to defend the suit. When he had stated his side of the case, and furnished the lawyer with the names of the people he intended to call as witnesses, the legal gentleman told him that the plaintiff really had no case. The case did not come to trial till the fall, but we may as well state here that Schmidt, the grocer, lost, hands down, and had to pay all the costs, as well as his lawyer's charges. He was out more than \$100 by the operation. Hal, however, was out \$25 to his lawyer which couldn't be helped under the circumstances. Like in a great many other suits, foolish and otherwise, only the lawyers and the court benefited.

CHAPTER XI.—The Blaze in the Cellar.

By the close of summer Hal paid up Mr. Stahl in full for everything, and was out of debt, except to his wholesaler, with whom he carried a standing account. A few of his customers changed to other grocers, chiefly because they were more convenient and now gave out trading stamps the same way the young grocer did. In fact, all the grocers were dispensing the stamps because they had to, and quite a number of other stores in the district adopted the practice to attract new customers and hold their old ones. Dinny Moran had made good in every way, and was no longer the little tough he once was, though he still was regarded as a member of the Finnerty gang.

The crowd had lost some members and acquired others, so that, numerically, it was about the same all the time. Finnerty held his job in the printing office, and his wages helped his mother to square up with Hal and get many things she had long needed. Patrick Moran was back on his job again, after a lay-off of seven weeks. He had brought a suit against the company that owned the schooner, on board of which he had met with his accident. But as the case was certain to be appealed if he won, it would be a long time before the matter was finally decided.

As the lawyer had taken the case on a contingent fee—contingent on winning and collecting damages, Moran, if ultimately successful, would get less than half of whatever money a jury awarded to him. Hal and Hazel had grown to think so much of each other that they were engaged to be married—but that happy event was still in the misty future. One morning Hal read that a big grocery store at the other end of town, which had been badly damaged by fire, was going to hold a sale, under the auspices of the insurance company which had issued a policy covering the stock.

He took his wagon and went over there to see what he could pick up cheap for cash. A bunch of other grocers were present, prepared to bid for what they desired. The sale started at ten o'clock and Hal bought about \$100 worth of goods. He did a little trade in canned stuff, and most of the stuff he bought was canned articles that had been more or less damaged on the outside by water and smoke. The contents of the cans were probably as good as ever. Hal got the contents of several

shelves, and when he got back to the store he stored them in his cellar and used them as specials, and they went off like hot cakes at a price which yielded him about \$75 profit on the batch. He and Hazel sometimes remained up late in the living-room and sometimes he took her to a show, which also served to make their retiring hour late. They reached the store one night about half-past eleven, after an evening at the theater, when they saw a light smoke rising through the flap of the cellar.

"Good gracious!" cried Hal, "I wonder if the cellar has caught fire? I must investigate at once."

He rushed into the store, got the key of the cellar and started to open the padlock when he discovered that it had been wrenched off.

"There's been crooked business here," he said. "Telephone to the police, Hazel, that there's a fire in my cellar—quick!"

The girl rushed into the store to do it, while Hal threw open the cellar flap. A dense cloud of smoke came rolling out. With a beating heart, Hal waited for it to clear enough for him to venture down. He saw a glow at the back of the cellar and he began to fear the worst. Unable to curb his impatience, he groped his way down and saw quite a blaze licking its way up the stone wall and scorching the woodwork under the room where Mrs. Price was then asleep in bed. With smarting eyes from the smoke, Hal felt his way to the long shelf under the sidewalk where stood half a dozen red fire-buckets full of water.

Grabbing one of them, he rushed toward the blaze and fired the contents on it. Half of the fire was put out of business. A second bucket of water reduced the balance to sizzling embers. A third pail settled the fire completely, but the rafters above were hot and the contents of a fourth pail was necessary to remove all danger. By that time two chemical engines and a section of the fire department had arrived and aroused the neighborhood to a pitch of considerable excitement. Hal, half choked by the smoke and wet with water, gave way to the firemen. Their services were not greatly needed so far as the blaze was concerned, for it was practically out now, owing to Hal's prompt and plucky endeavors.

The investigation which ensued showed that it was a case of incendiarism. The unknown firebug had piled a lot of broken wood up over a bunch of excelsior, steeped the whole in kerosene and set it on fire. Had not Hal and Hazel come along when they did the building would have gone up in a blaze and Mrs. Price would probably have lost her life. The assistant chief who made the investigation said that had the fire got five minutes more headway they could hardly have saved the building. The grocery store, at any rate, would have been gutted, and Hal would have been put out of business.

"Some enemy of mine is evidently at the bottom of the business," Hal told the chief.

"Do you suspect any one?" he asked.

"No. The other grocers in this neighborhood are sore on me because I'm doing so well, but I don't think they would have let one of the boys burn me out, and at the same time endanger the lives of the people in the floor above," Hal replied.

A fireman remained in charge of the cellar that night, and another relieved him next morning. No one was allowed down there except Hal and Denny. A man from the insurance company called to adjust the damage, which didn't amount to much, and then Denny was sent down to clean up the place. He came up presently and handed Hal an envelope bearing the imprint of a grocer in the neighborhood. It was badly scorched, but the name and address of the person could be made out after some trouble. Hal pulled out the envelope, which read as follows:

"Your price is too high. Cut it in half and I'll agree. If that is satisfactory, do the job between eleven and twelve. See that the coast is clear before you do anything."

There was no signature—nothing whatever to show who the writer was. Hal turned it over to the police. A detective took the matter in hand, secured a specimen of the grocer's handwriting and compared the two. There was enough resemblance to induce the police to submit the two writings to the judgment of an expert. He declared over his signature that the two had been written by the same person. On the strength of that the grocer, whose name was Wagner, was arrested and charged with being the promoter of the blaze in Hal's cellar.

The man to whom the letter was sent was hauled up by the police and pressure being brought to bear on him he confessed that Wagner had made him the offer to set fire to Hal's cellar, as he wanted to put the boy grocer out of business. The result of all this was that Wagner was finally tried and convicted of premeditated arson, and was sent to prison for ten years, so that he and not Hal was put out of business. His accomplice was also convicted, but in consideration of appearing against Wagner he was let down easy—serving one year.

Wagner's stock was sold at auction after his conviction, and Hal bought half of his stock much cheaper than the regular wholesale price. Some of it he offered as specials and the rest he put on his shelves as regular goods. So Hal came out ahead all around. It soon continued to perch over his store, which was known all over the district as the "little red corner store." If you wanted anything in the grocery line that Hal didn't keep he could get it for you, even if he made nothing out of it. He believed it paid to be accommodating, and sometimes to go out of the way to serve people.

Mrs. Flannerty and Mrs. Moran, too, swore by Hal. They each secured him many new customers among the new tenants constantly moving into the neighborhood. One day Hal called on Jack Stahl. The Dutchman was doing a large business, but complained that he was compelled to trust many of his best customers for a month or two at a time. He found he had to do it to retain their trade, and he had two of these people on his books who had moved away somewhere and failed to settle up. So he a number had also shaken out of a week or two's trust. Altogether he had several hundred dollars of bad debts on his books. Nevertheless, he was making money, on the whole, but it worried him greatly, to lose even

a dollar of what was coming to him. Hal learned these facts, but not from Stahl himself, but Mrs. Stahl, who was more communicative.

"It's a bad ding to trust, Hally," said Mrs. Stahl. "Der people took advantage off you. But's der vay dey got square mit der cost off living. Dey took id oud off der groceryman, und der patcher, under der paker. Vhen ve had der little store ve didn't trust der people more as a week, und der losses ves small; but here ve have a larger business, der people pay more und put on a big bill, some off dem. Vhen you ask dem for der money, dey stood you up, und der id is. Our expenses are large, und vhen a customer shoves us mit a big bill ve lose der best cost und our profits, too."

"I've trusted twice as much as you folks did, but I haven't lost a whole lot," said Hal. "I haven't so many book accounts at present, and I consider most of them good and am not worrying about them."

"Vell, you are a party smart pay, Hally. Id ain't everybody vot could took dot little store und made id pay."

"It certainly had a black eye when I took hold, but I pulled it right up on a money-making basis."

"I don't seen how you done id."

"It would take me some time to explain the methods I adopted. I will say one thing, however: I owe a lot of my success to Miss Harl Price. She has taken as much interest in the store as if it were her own."

"Den you ought to get married to her und you haff her all der dime for keeps," replied Mrs. Stahl.

"We are going to get married some day, but that's a secret at present."

Mrs. Stahl congratulated him on finding such a helpful young lady, and after some further conversation Hal took his leave.

CHAPTER XII.—The Explosion.

One day, shortly afterward, a man came into the little store when Hal was at dinner. Hal was at the desk and Denny was filling a box of orders to take around in the wagon. He walked up to the desk, placed a small satchel on the shelf under the window, opened it and took out a long cylinder.

"Do you see this?" he said to the girl.

"Yes," replied Hazel, wondering what the man had to sell, for he appeared to be a street peddler.

"This holds a stick of dynamite. Hand over the money in your drawer, or I'll blow you and the store into the next world," he said fiercely.

Hazel was staggered, and she opened her mouth to scream for Hal.

"If you utter a sound I'll blow the place up anyway."

The quick-witted girl looked at him.

"You'd kill yourself, too," she said.

"What do I care? I must have money, and I don't care what risk I take to get it."

"You must be crazy."

"I don't want to hear from you. Shove out the money, quick, or——"

He raised his arm with the stick of alleged dynamite threateningly. Dinny had heard his threat and his hair rose with fright at first. He stared goggle-eyed at the man's back and listened to what followed. When the man raised his arm Dinny thought he saw the chance to grab the store and all in it. He sprang forward, grabbed the cylinder, and wrenched it out of the man's hand. At that moment Hal appeared through the rear door. The man uttered an imprecation and turned on Dinny. The youth darted behind a pile of small boxes on top of which was arranged a pyramid of canned tomatoes. The man rushed after him and Dinny scurried to the front door where he was blocked by two women coming in. Before he could skin between them the man reached for him and seized him by his shirt.

Hazel hurriedly explained the situation to the surprised Hal, and the young grocer jumped for the man, while Hazel telephoned for the police. The two women uttered ejaculations of alarm, for they were thrown roughly aside by the man. Dinny shoved his foot backward against the man's shins, but the rascal did not let go of him. Then Dinny chucked the cylinder into the street, and, turning, seized his assailant around the waist as Hal grabbed him by the shoulders from behind. The cylinder hit the car track and a tremendous explosion followed, blowing in the two windows of the little store and demolishing all the windows in the immediate neighborhood. The cobblestones flew every way, mingled with the dirt of the street, and half a dozen persons passing at the time were hurt, more or less severely.

Hal's display of green goods was scattered all over the walk and blown into the store. The shock threw Hal, Dinny, the man and the two women down on the floor. The building was shaken from cellar to roof, in common with the corner house opposite, while a score of the adjoining structures shook as if in the throes of an earthquake. The explosion was easily heard all over town, and created considerable consternation. Everything movable in the little store and in some of the neighboring ones was thrown about, and Hal's place in particular looked like a wreck.

To say that the inhabitants and storekeepers in that part of town were panic-stricken would give but a faint idea of the state of things immediately after the explosion. Two policemen were just leaving the station house in response to Hal's call, and they at once started on the run. The captain, who was in his office, felt the shock quite plainly, though all of five blocks away. He lost no time in ordering out the reserves and sending them to the spot. The fire department responded with a couple of steamers and a whole regiment of men. In the meantime, Hal and Dinny rounded the rascal into a dazed state and then bound him hand and foot.

They had completed the job when one of the two policemen sent first hurried into the store. Hazel had called her frightened mother, and with her trembling aid they got the hysterical women customers into the living room, which was littered with the dishes and remains of dinner. When the reserves came running up they found a hole in the street big enough to dump a ton or two of coal. A cordon was formed across the

street at the corner and another one farther down the street. The fire department arrived, but there was nothing for the members to do. People from all parts of the town were fast arriving to find out the cause of the explosion.

The captain of the precinct who had accompanied his reserves, took charge, and soon learned the facts from Dinny and Hazel. The rascal was handcuffed and rushed to the station house, where he was locked up and kept under watch. As soon as the first excitement was over, Hal thought of his horse and wagon. The rig always stood on the side street, to be out of the way. The animal had not taken fright, but had backed about ten feet and then stopped. He brought the rig back to its place. Dinny had been placed under arrest as having been the cause of the explosion, but was not taken to the station house, being paroled on Hal's guarantee that he would be on hand when wanted.

Things were pretty bad in the crockery and glassware store opposite, where several hundred dollars' worth of stock was broken. The force of the explosion seemed to have gone on that side. Not a whole pane of glass remained in the opposite building or its neighbors, while half of those in the building where the little store was situated were either broken or cracked. Of course, a bunch of reporters were soon on the scene. One of them tackled Hal.

"How did this explosion happen, and what caused it?" he asked.

"A man, who looks to me to be crazy, came into my store and told my cashier if she didn't hand all the money in the drawer over to him he'd blow the place up with the stick of dynamite he carried."

"He didn't blow the store up. Did the girl hand over the money?"

"She did not."

"She's a plucky one."

"She has proved her nerve before against two thieves, one of whom threatened her with his revolver. She shot and slightly wounded one of them, but both got away and never were caught. You may remember the incident, for it was printed in the papers at the time."

"I don't recall it at this moment. Well, what did the man do when she refused to hand over the cash?"

"She did not refuse, but tried to temporize with him."

"Yes," said the reporter, taking down his shorthand notes.

"He grew impatient and raised the dynamite menacingly, whereupon my errand boy stole up behind him and grabbed it."

"Good for him!"

Hal then explained what followed, and how Dinny had tossed the dynamite into the street to prevent the man from recovering it.

"The shock of hitting the cylinder exploded the dynamite," concluded Hal.

"I see," said the reporter. "Now, what damage have you suffered?"

"I haven't estimated it yet."

"Both of your windows are smashed."

"Yes."

"The inside of your store is pretty well wrecked."

"Looks like it, doesn't it? A few of the ar-

ticles in glass, like pickles and such, are ruined, and some of my eggs are out of business; but the most of my stock is merely thrown about, and, being in cans and pasteboard boxes, they can stand it. When I start in to fix things up, I'll make a note of my loss. I don't think I will suffer much, for I had my windows insured when I bought out the store," said Hal.

"I don't see that the ceiling or the walls have suffered any."

"Apparently not."

The reporter asked a few more questions and then started across the street, where the damage was greatest. Little business was done in that vicinity for the rest of the day, but Hal and Dinny had their hands full repairing damages, with the aid of several of the Finnerty crowd. To the latter Hal gave the job of straightening out his green stuff and picking or shaking the splintered glass out of it. Of course, some of it had to be thrown away, for Hal couldn't think of selling it, but most of it was restored to a serviceable shape.

Hal took advantage of the chance to clean all his shelves and when that had been done the goods that belonged on them were restored to their places. The windows were boarded up for the time being until new glass plates were put in by the insurance company, whose loss was considerable all around. Hal's actual loss, including what he paid to the Finnerty bunch, did not exceed \$15 all told, and he had good reason to congratulate himself on getting out of a bad predicament so cheaply.

CHAPTER XIII.—Potatoes for Everybody.

By dark, around five o'clock, everything was ship-shape once more in the little store, barring the usual window display, and customers were coming in and going out the same as ever. Of course, all who came began to talk about the explosion, and asked Hal if he had lost much, as well as questions about the man who was the cause of it all. Hal's business rivals chuckled with satisfaction over the occurrence, hoping that the boy grocer had suffered considerable loss.

When they read in the paper next morning that he had got off easy, much easier than some of his neighbors, they were much chagrined. The rascal who had caused the damage was found to be insane, so he was not brought into court for a preliminary hearing, but was sent to the insane ward of the county hospital to be watched. Dinny was obliged to appear at the police court, for he was under arrest for having actually caused the explosion. Hal went with him, and after the magistrate had heard his story he was discharged.

More than a week elapsed before the windows were all replaced in the stores and the street resumed its usual aspect. All the grocers had been giving specials before Hal started out for himself, but they had only done it to a limited degree, confining themselves to reducing the price of butter, eggs and certain brands of canned goods a couple of cents. The boy grocer took the wind out of their sales by picking up job lots cheaply, like the apple and orange speculations, and selling them at a positive bargain.

The other grocers couldn't understand how he managed it, for they couldn't afford to cut prices the way he did at times. At first they looked to see him fail, but when he didn't, but appeared to grow more prosperous all the time, they got down on him, as we have seen. Schmidt was the only one of the bunch who had the nerve to try to put him out of business by hiring a man to set fire to his cellar, and he got severely punished for it and was closed up himself in the end when he was sent away.

Winter came around, and as the weather grew colder there was very little garden stuff to be got at the market, except what was brought up the river from the South. The potato stock got low and the price more than doubled, which was hard on the poor people in Hal's district, who lived largely on them. Hal made his rivals more angry by selling his potatoes close to cost, thereby obliging them to do the same or lose trade. One of them came into his store and abused him for his price-cutting methods.

"I am selling potatoes low, because the people around here need them and cannot afford to get enough if they have to pay the current rates," said Hal.

"What have these people to do with you? They wouldn't help you if you went to the wall," said the grocer.

"They couldn't, whether they would or not; but that is nothing to me. I am trying to help them over the winter, and I don't see why you should come in here and scold me for doing it. Isn't the cost of living high enough, anyway? The longshoremen don't have steady work at this season, for the vessels don't come up as often as at other times in the year. Give the poor folks a show."

"Charity begins at home," growled the man.

"Well, don't let us argue the matter, for we can't agree."

"Then you intend to keep down the price of potatoes?"

"As much as I can. They are only one article, and I see no reason for you or the other grocers kicking about it."

"You've been cutting prices on different things since you bought out Stahl. How do you manage to do it and get along?"

"That is one of my business secrets. Still it's a secret all of you chaps ought to be wise to, for you've been in business a whole lot longer than I have."

"It isn't a fair deal to the rest of us."

"Everything honest is fair in business."

"It looks as if you were trying to run us out."

"How could I? The idea is ridiculous!"

"You forced us to give trading stamps away to retain our trade."

"Hasn't it helped you?"

"It's a useless expense."

"Why, it helps to make cash sales and reduce credit accounts. Sum it up at the end of a year and you will find you have avoided more loss than the stamps cost you. Besides, it saves printing in the way of statements, and worry over customers you have found unreliable. I think I have benefited the crowd of you."

The man had no reply to make to his argument, for he knew it was true, at any rate, in his experience since he found himself obliged to

adopt the stamp system. He made nothing by his visit and departed. Shortly after this, Hal invested the whole of his reserve capital in a sloopload of potatoes. He bought 100 baskets, each holding about three bushels, of a Memphis broker and had them shipped to Dexter at his own expense. When they arrived he had his cellar cleared to receive them. He hired a truck to fetch them to his store. On each side of the truck he had a cloth sign painted, "Potatoes to burn. Go to the little store on the corner, Hal Hardy, proprietor, for your potatoes. They will be sold at a price within the means of all."

Then followed the price per quart, peck, and bushel.

Beside the driver sat one of the Finnerty crowd with a megaphone through which he yelled, "Potatoes!" Perched on the load were two more of the gang, with a bass and a snare drum, and they made more noise than music. The truck made two trips and paraded the tenement district each time. Every housewife soon learned that they could get potatoes reasonable at Hal Hardy's and a crowd with baskets marched to his store. The customers for potatoes came so fast that afternoon that Hal kept his three extra lads to help wait on the people. He had the potatoes displayed all around the front of the store, with a big sign worded, "Here's where you cut the cost of living. Potatoes! Potatoes! All you want at reduced prices. Right from the South. From the producer to the little store on the corner. Imported for the benefit of our customers."

When trade slackened up the Finnerty boys got out the big drum and the little one and banged away, while the third lad used the megaphone on the corner. The result of all this was considerable excitement on the block, and some jubilation all over the neighborhood at the reduced cost of potatoes. The other grocers had a fit when they heard about it, and learned that Hal was offering his potatoes at a cent or two above the wholesale rate.

Hal was denounced as though he were a pirate, but he didn't care for their kicking; he was doing it for the benefit of the poor in his zone, and was satisfied with a small profit on his venture. The potatoes lasted some time, and during that period very few potatoes were sold by the other grocers, though they cut their prices down. Of course, Hal also made in other ways. People who would not have traveled to his store except on account of cheap potatoes bought other things they needed in the grocery line, and out of the bunch of strangers he annexed a number of steady customers.

When all his potatoes were sold he found he had cleared \$200 on the shipment. By that time the price of potatoes had come down a bit, so he did not repeat his experiment. He tried the apple scheme again by visiting several farmers and buying up all of their cheap apples. Most of the farmers had let that grade rot on the ground, but two or three, on arrangement with Hal, had gathered them and held them for him till he was ready to take them, when they were shipped to him at his expense. That gave him another steady for a while. All these things advertised him from one end of the district to the other. Whether the people traded with him regularly

or not, they all knew the "little store at the corner."

The women told newcomers: "If you want to get things cheap, watch the specials of the little store. Hal Hardy always has something that he sells lower than any other grocer."

The little girl that Hal employed every Saturday as cashier lost her day job at the very time the young grocer wanted more help, so he gave her a steady position in his store. He also had to hire another boy to help Dinny on Saturdays, and he took on Tim Gallagher, one of the Finnerty lads. He made deliveries on foot with a basket, and did nothing else.

The next scheme Hal engineered was to put an inexpensive piece of fine-looking china or glassware in the window, with a sign which read, "To be presented free to the customer buying the most goods for cash during the week." Every time a customer bought something, no matter what, she got a ticket with the amount purchased in it, so they could keep tab. On Monday the winner got the prize. He then offered two and finally three prizes. Then he gave away tickets with a new brand of tea and coffee, for each half a pound of tea or pound of coffee. When the purchasers had collected a certain number of tickets they could exchange them for half a pound of tea or a pound of the coffee. In this way he drew added custom and money to his store.

CHAPTER XIV.—Conclusion.

One of Hal's business rivals stuck cheap china and glassware all about his window and put signs up telling the public that the articles were given away with this and that purchase. It didn't hurt Hal any, but he pulled in trade from the other grocers, and they set up a howl.

"It's bad enough to have to buck against the little store, but Mulligan has no right to steal our trade," said a disgruntled one.

Mulligan heard what he said and laughed.

"I'm bucking the little store. If you fellows get hurt, I can't help it. I'm running this store for Mulligan," he said.

When Hal put out one of his ordinary specials, Mulligan imitated him, and this procedure reached the young grocer's ears.

"He isn't worrying me any," he said. "He can't buy his goods any cheaper than I can, if, in some cases, as cheap."

On the following Saturday evening, about dark, Mulligan sent a wagon around the neighborhood with illuminated signs, reading:

"Buy your groceries at Mulligan's—the little store in the middle of the block. Trading stamps given away with every cash purchase amounting to ten cents or more. Mulligan's tea and coffee are the best in town. Prizes given away. Do your Saturday's trading early at Mulligan's and avoid the rush."

Hal, for a joke, hired the whole Finnerty gang, dressed them in odd attire, gave each a small transparency and, with a bass and snare drum, started them on a tour of the district on the following Saturday, with directions to follow be-

hind Mulligan's wagon. That got Mulligan's goat and he discontinued the wagon. He flooded the district with circulars, carrying his name in heavy bold type. Hal bought up a lot of canned fish cheap at auction and on Thursday night he sent circulars broadcast:

"Special for Friday—Fine canned salmon, 10 cents a can, at the little store on the corner. Come any time, you will always find a rush."

Hal had only given 4 cents a can for the fish, and the wholesale price was 11 cents. The rivalry between Mulligan and Hal grew warmer every day. The former often sold goods at cost to put it over the young grocer, but Hal never imitated him in this respect. He simply kept on the lookout for bargains in his line, not only in Dexter, but elsewhere. He subscribed for newspapers in other places that advertised these bargain sales.

During the summer Hal got a sloopload of Mexican oranges from New Orleans dead cheap. It was a large sloop, and she was loaded to her hatches. The speculator had bought the oranges from a plantation back of Vera Cruz, and he expected to make a good thing, but they fell flat in New Orleans and a broker who had sold Hal a load of bananas a short time before wired him that he could get the oranges for a song. Hal wired the money and ordered the sloop to be sent on to Dexter tow of a tug.

The captain kept him posted by wire from different places, and when the sloop was nearly due he advertised the oranges for sale to dealers, cheap, in the papers. He also hired a number of open wagons and engaged all the Finnerty gang

to cover the town and sell the oranges at 15 cents a dozen. When the sloop arrived the oranges were first offered to the dealers at ten cents a dozen. At such a price they eagerly bought them, intending to sell them for a quarter. When all the dealers had been satisfied, Hal sent a wagonload to his store and put them on sale at 15 cents.

Then he sent the wagons out full of them. Counting the cost of the oranges, the expense of getting them to Dexter, and the number he had to throw into the river, Hal's profit only amounted to \$150, but he was that much ahead and had accumulated a lot of advertising. For some time Hal had found himself cramped for room. The apartment above becoming vacant, he arranged with Mrs. Price to take it, and then he used the two back rooms for storing goods in, and had a side door cut to connect with the street.

He was doing twice the business that Mulligan did, and Mulligan beat out all the other dealers in the district. Hal had gradually worked into a cash business through his methods, though he trusted those who could not pay in cash. We have no space to tell how Hal eventually branched out by establishing a second, and then a third store in that district. His aim was to control the whole trade of the cheap zone in which he had started, and he ultimately succeeded in getting nearly all the other dealers out.

Thus Hal's business venture proved a prosperous undertaking, and long before he married Hazel he had made a success of himself.

Next week's issue will contain "AMONG THE MAN-EATERS, or, THE SECRET OF THE GOLDEN LEDGE."

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CURRENT NEWS

"OLDEST DWELLING" IS FOUND.

A dwelling which experts say was built in the stone age and which still contains domestic utensils has been found in East Prussia. This is the oldest dwelling thus far found in Germany.

CIDER PRESSES IN DEMAND.

Over 1,000 cider presses have been delivered into the apple growing districts of the state of Washington this season because of the increased demand for cider. There is a market there for thousands of tons of "cull" apples, which heretofore have been left to rot under the trees. A State law forbids the retailing or even giving away of cull apples without proper inspection of fairly good fruit—fine for cider or vinegar.

FALSE TEETH IN SEWER.

For several days city workmen were searching in the business district for a sewer that had been clogged and was flooding cellars, especially during stormy weather.

After digging several holes and attempting to flush out several sewers the prospectors discovered their trouble in a sewer that backfired when they attempted the usual methods of flushing and cleaning it.

The usual amount of sticks, boards and bottles were extracted, but there was more than the usual surprise when the workmen found that a set of false teeth had gummed up the works.

JAM WITH WASPS.

When customers in a popular tea garden in London order jam a waiter asks: "Jam with wasps or no jam and no wasps?" That is the proprietor's way of trying to prevent his customers eating jam, for wasps have been plentiful this year and have bothered him so much that he says he has lost 50 per cent. of his patronage because his customers were driven away by the swarms of wasps attracted by jam.

At first he tried to eliminate jam from his menu, but his patrons demanded it. Therefore, he says, he now advises them and lets them take the risk. If the wasps drive them away they cannot complain, he asserts.

WASHINGTON POLICE SEEK BANDITS ON CRUTCHES.

The police to-day are looking for three highwaymen, cripples, two on crutches and the other leaning on a cane who held up Thomas Payne, of Washington, and robbed him of \$20, according to Payne's complaint to the police.

Payne told the police he was sitting in his automobile, accompanied by a young woman on a road about 100 yards from the Walter Reed Army Hospital, when at pistol point he was commanded to leave the machine by three men who leaped across the road with him, appropriated the \$20, and then, ordering him back to the car, threatened to shoot unless he drove away slowly. He counted all three as hatless and coatless.

LOBSTERS THRIVE

Lobsters, eighteen inches long are being taken from the water in Quilgene, Wash., in a newly invented gill net.

Four years ago 500 young lobsters from the New Jersey coast were transplanted in Hood's Canal, an arm of Puget Sound, as an experiment. The temperature of the water here averages ten degrees colder than that of the Atlantic, but the lobsters have thrived and increased.

Nets were set at intervals along the shore to ascertain just how prolific these shell-fish have been. Eastern oysters planted in Puget Sound several years ago have increased until the home product supplies the Northwest markets.

SIGHT RESTORED.

William Dawson, of Maysville, Ky., eighty years old, who after years of blindness has regained his sight sufficiently to distinguish certain objects, left for Cincinnati, where he will undergo an operation which, it is promised, will enable him to see well.

Dawson retired from the Maysville police force when he was stricken after several years of service.

During his years of darkness his chief diversion was attending baseball games. Though sitting in utter darkness he could tell when a batter hit the ball, in which direction it went and whether it was a safe hit.

The first indication that he would see again came about two weeks ago, when he learned he he was able to see the windows in his room.

PEARLS IN PLANTS

Few people realize that there are such things as vegetable pearls. Yet, now and again, in certain tropical plants curious hard round substances are found which one may properly call pearls, seeing that their composition is almost identical with the product of the oyster. For instance, occasionally in Java these substances are discovered in the joints of bamboos. On analysis the bodies are found to consist of almost pure carbonate of lime—the same substance which goes to the make-up of the pearl of the oyster. Now and again similar bodies are found in the endosperm of the cocoanut while these plant pearls are known to occur in the wood of the pomegranate and teak trees. These vegetable pearls are sometimes as large as a hazel nut although as a rule they are somewhat smaller. Exactly how the vegetable pearls arise is not fully known. They are generally believed to be due to an excess of calcareous and silicious matter in the plant. The plant pedals are rarely seen apart from the East Indian islands, for they are highly valued as charms. The owner will not part with one for any figure seeing that as long as he holds the pearl he believes that he will be immune from all ills which commonly assail mankind.

Daring Dan Dobson

—OR—

THE BOY WHO BEAT THE MOONSHINERS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER I.—(Continued.)

This was enough for our hero, who saw a little puff of smoke drift into nothingness from the nearby group of rocks.

The horse could not go there, and Dan sprang from Starlight's back, tossing the reins over his head, which meant for the trained animal to remain standing there.

With the shotguns, Dan rushed the rocks, fearless as though he were running after a chicken.

Bang!

Another bullet sung past his head, but Dan was up on a level with the rocks by this time, with his gun poised.

He had spied an arm and head protruding above the line of stone, and ripped forth a shot on his own accord.

"Wow!"

A voice gave evidence that some of the flying cloud of buckshot had taken effect.

Dan was over the ledge by this time, and beheld three of the men running. They only had one gun between them, but Dan had the drop on them, and took away that.

"Now stand on that rock, and open up your pocket—I want your knives," said he, when he had the rifle in his left hand. "I'm going to blow off the first man who tries to double on me."

The muttering mountaineers glared, but looks did not harm the intrepid youth. He collected quite a small array of long folding knives and even one antiquated pair of brass knuckles which the wounded man had in his pocket.

"There, wrap up his wrist; he's not badly hurt!"

The youth's order rang out as grimly as though he were an executioner, and the bad men were clever enough to know when they had met a master.

Dan pointed toward the direction from which his chase had begun.

"Now, you fellows march ahead of me. I'm going to turn you over to the law back in Hilldale!"

The men snarled and one started to run. But a warning gesture with the gun brought him to his senses. The men had been cowed by Dan's goodness and grit; now he had a comparatively easy task, as he marched them first to his hat, and then down the road in front of him, while he rode on Starlight.

When the lad reach Hilldale, he was given a great ovation by the law-loving citizens of Hilldale.

Dan's father was very proud of his son's achievement, but the old colonel was so weakened by the effects of the attack that he did not recover his health and strength for many weeks.

The time dragged into months before the old gentleman was able to be up and about, and in the meantime a calamity had befallen him which required immediate action from Dan, who had become his veritable right hand in all his work.

CHAPTER II.

Wherein Is Shown How Daring Helps.

Now, this misfortune was one which interfered seriously with the plans of Dan.

The youth was just on the point of starting away to college, at the University of Tennessee, where he would have begun the career of law, when he suddenly threw up his own interests to be of assistance to his father.

Without a word of complaint, he made the sacrifice of his hopes and good times at college, after hard study of several years, to fit himself for the entrance examinations.

Dan's father was the owner of a great stretch of land about ninety miles away from Hilldale.

It covered many thousands of acres, and was a wonderfully rich piece of land, in several respects. The colonel had purchased it with money inherited from his own father; when he bought it, as a young man, the stretch of country had been very cheap. But, during the years which followed, it had been brought nearer civilization by the spreading of the railroads, the growth of cities and towns. Its value had gone steadily upward, and the colonel had refused many a flattering offer for it.

"No, sirree," he declared. "Every time any one bids for it, the price is going higher. I have a fine government position, and I have enough to live on. Being honest, I have not grafted on my position—and so this land is the only home I can leave Dan and his sister Bess. I shall keep it. The title is clear, and it ought to bring hundreds of thousands."

But it was hard work keeping up with the taxes on the land, because the state officials kept raising the assessments, and the colonel would have been glad to realize on what he considered its true value.

During his illness of the summer, resulting from the beating on the lonely road, a big part of his property had been ravaged by a forest fire, reported by some of the country people as purposely started by revengeful mountaineers.

A fine farmhouse, located at the southern end of the land, had been burned, driving out a tenant who had long been of great help in maintaining the estate.

Then came disquieting reports that on one corner of the land, farthest away from Hilldale, and adjoining another property had been located a profitable coal mine which was being systematically worked by the people of the adjacent ground.

(To be continued)

FROM ALL POINTS

DRINKING HOGS.

Sheriff Johnson of Jonesboro, Ark., who returned the other night from a flying trip to Brookland, unblushingly confessed that he aided in the accumulation of one of the worst "jags" he ever saw.

The "jags" were sported by hogs of the four-footed variety, however. The Sheriff and his deputies had located a still near Brookland, where they found 900 gallons of mash in nineteen barrels and a gallon of whisky. They poured out the mash and the whisky and immediately a herd of hungry porkers gathered around and greedily devoured the mash.

Then followed a bizarre sight. The porkers became uproariously drunk and with wild, fierce squeals, they flew at each other. Rearing up on their hind feet, trying to strike each other with their fore feet, losing their balance and rolling and tumbling over each other, they battled until they fell from exhaustion, while the officers laughed until the tears came.

ONLY TWO OF TWELVE HUGE GERMAN GUNS FOUND

The most mysterious problem growing out of the war has not yet been solved. What has become of the "Big Bertha" guns with which the Germans shelled Paris and which they intended to develop so as to send high explosives across the Channel? Only one gun was found intact and a second partly dismantled, but allied control officials have been informed that at least a dozen such guns had been completed when the armistice stopped operations.

All demands for the details of their destruction, however, are being met with shrugs and stares of astonishment and the suggestion that they were probably broken up for scrap with other material—which the Allies know is untrue.

As tests are known to have been carried out on the sandy shores of the North Sea, the Control Commission is now considering sending a group of plain clothes investigators to patrol the long range sand dunes with the idea of ascertaining if the Germans have merely buried their long range weapons with their secret appliances until a good opportunity arises to use them effectively against their traditional enemy.

TRAINING FLEAS

The training of fleas to do any sort of trick is, of course, a tedious, difficult matter. The first thing to do is to break them of their natural habit of jumping.

One can see how necessary this is when one considers that the insect is less than one-eighth of an inch in length, has a jump of three feet, thus 240 times its own length. If a six-foot man had the same leaping power he could accomplish jumps of 1,800 feet, so that when a flea has the

advantage of one leap he is as good as gone forever.

Usually the apparatus for jump-breaking is a round glass ball. The flea is confined in this ball for a period of three weeks. The trainer looks through this ball, touches it, flashes lights into it, talks into it, in fact, does everything to accustom the flea to his presence. At first the flea will jump and jump. He strikes against the curved walls and gets bruised. After a time, and three weeks are generally found to be ample, the flea gets to know his trainer, and he also learns that it is less painful to crawl than to jump and get bruised.

The flea cannot differentiate between transparent glass and no glass at all, so that when the trainer takes him from the ball he still strikes this peculiar obstruction, and so he doesn't jump. From this it will be seen that a flea must possess some sort of reasoning power or instinct in this relation. The trainer finds it necessary however, to pick them up with tweezers and place them on his arm when he wants to feed them. They don't dare to jump on him.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, 166 W. 23d St., New York

A CURIOUS CASE

By Paul Braddon

Splash!

There was the sound of whispered voices and hurrying footsteps along the projecting pier.

"Run for it quick, Dan, alongside that wharf!" I said, in subdued tones, to the boatman at the oars, and with a few sturdy strokes the boat shot through the water and darkness into an opening among the timbers.

I waited a few moments in expectation of hearing conversation which might unravel these mysterious doings at such a mid-night hour. But it was all darkness and silence.

"Dan, some terrible crime has been committed, and these waters have been used to bury it in silence. Did you hear that splash? Can you see any object moving in the water?"

"I see nothing, Tom. It was some river thieves, who threw something in after being out on a forage through the city."

"Come, we'll see who they are, anyway," and, signalling to Dan to follow, I clambered up to the dock and crept cautiously along the side for fear my birds might get sight and take wing.

"There's nobody here," I whispered, but the next moment my quick eyes caught the shadow of two figures just disappearing up a small street where there were no lights to show who they were.

Approaching with all the cunning and caution of my class I saw a tall man assisting a lady into a cab. He hastily mounted the box himself and drove off with great speed.

For a moment I was in a quandary what to do or how to act. At last I started on a run after the cab, managing to keep it in sight till it turned into Fifth avenue.

Rushing up to a cabby, I said, out of breath: "Follow that cab with the tall driver and high hat wherever he goes," and, leaping in, I was soon driving along at a furious rate to make up the lost distance.

He turned into one street and then down another, till I was at times at a loss to tell in what part of the city we were. When I found that we were going out so far to the north of the city to be in the suburbs, in the direction of Washington Heights, I stuck my head out, and called to the driver:

"Don't go too near! the party will think they are pursued and throw us off the scent. Very few cabs are moving along the Boulevard at this hour of the night."

The driver slackened the pace and soon came to a stand-still, when he dismounted.

"Then people," he said, "drove into that way."

I leaped out, was over a hedge and ascending the lawn secreted by the trees.

The lady alighted, descended the steps of the main entrance, and at once disappeared in the darkness.

"What a fool I have been," I mentally murmured. "This has been a wild-goose chase, and all for nothing."

I was standing on the grounds connected with

the well-known mansion of Samuel Tilford, member of the old-established drug house of Mathews, Tilford & Co. He was known for his great wealth and extensive green-house, which is observed and admired by all travelers on the Hudson River road.

On returning to my cab the driver asked:

"What does all this chase mean?"

"None of your business. Drive me back to the city," I sullenly and savagely replied.

Some time elapsed, but the pressure of other business did not serve to drive out of my mind the strange incident on the wharf and my bootless pursuit to the Tilford mansion. There was no more loving and united married couple to be found than Mr. and Mrs. Tilford, so far as the outside world knew. They were rich, had all that heart could desire, and were happy in each other's society.

But there was a skeleton in the household.

For some years there had been in the employ of the firm a young man by the name of Louis Atherton.

By close application, active habits, and agreeable manners he had worked himself up in the confidence of his employers. He also became an intimate friend of the family of Tilford's, and was often a visitor at the mansion.

At length it was discovered that he had gained an undue influence over Mrs. Tilford. I found out that he had actually been detected in a liaison with her, the knowledge of which had led her to make a full confession to her husband. This was known to but very few friends of the family.

The upshot of all, however, was a condoning of the crime, the dissolution of Louis Atherton's connection with the drug house, and report had it that he had gone to Europe to spend a few years.

I need not try to inform the reader how I obtained this information, but no sooner was I in possession of it than I set to work. My curiosity was excited to the highest pitch, inasmuch as I felt that I had by chance obtained the knowledge of a clue that was worth at least following up.

One night my faithful boatman, Dan, said to me:

"Tom, what have you got all this apparatus for?"

"You'll see presently, Dan," I replied. "Moor the boat in near the wharf. You remember the night we heard that splash in the water? Well, I've got it into my mind that there's something there worth fishing for, but I want it kept a secret. Do you understand?"

"I understand, old boy. You can reply on me."

It was long after midnight, and there was no danger of interruption from even the prowlers who are the last to fall asleep in their haunts.

We got our grappling-hooks and lines, sank them into the deep waters, and then rowed back and forth with muffled oars. At times our hooks would seize on some object, and Dan and I turned away to pull it to the surface, but it always turned out to be something which did not seem to satisfy us. He rowed over the same ground again and again, till we had about concluded that it was of no use to make any further effort.

when the grapplings hooked on to some bulky, weighy object, that required all our might to raise to the boat. Dan said:

"Tom, we'll upset the boat afore we can get this thing in it, whatever it is."

"Let's float it to the wharf, then."

Dan took the oars, while I held on to the ropes.

"It's a sea-monster of some kind, with a spiral body," I said, as I looked as well as I could at it through the darkness.

"One of those devil-fish rolled up, p'raps," said Dan. "You want to look out for his arms when he spreads them, or he'll draw ye in."

On reaching a small float among the timbers, I leaped upon it, still holding on to the strange-looking object till it lay at our feet.

I turned the light of a bull's-eye lantern upon it.

"Holy Moses!" cried Dan, starting back with fright; "it's a corpse!"

"As sure as I live!" I exclaimed, while a shiver went through me, and the goose pimples crept all over my flesh.

"Them eyes are lookin' at us!" continued Dan.

The body had been stripped, encased in canvas, and gagged, and a long spiral piece of lead pipe twisted around the body to insure its sinking in the depths, and too keep hid from the world forever the knowledge that a great and hideous crime had been committed.

One of the grappling-hooks had caught the corner of the canvas near the head, and on account of the great weight, a rent had been made so that the head protruded from the canvas sack, revealing the ghastly features and staring eyeballs.

It was a sight to appall the stoutest heart.

I pulled a photograph of Louis Atherton from my pocket—which I had by great shrewdness secured, and although the features were greatly distorted, I was not long in determining that it was he whose body lay before us.

On the following morning the authorities were notified, and the coroner's jury gave their decision that—

"Some person unknown and unrecognized had caused the death by foul means at the hands of some person or persons unknown to them."

"The name of the person in this mornin's paper the name of the discovery of a human body?"

"Yes, Maria, and I fear the consequences of that discovery," replied Samuel Tilford to his wife, with a tremor in his voice, and a nervous agitation that he could not conceal. They were out walking on the lawn late in the afternoon, upon his return from business.

"Can it be possible that it was the body of——"

She could not utter the name, as her voice failed.

"Yes, not only possible, but certain. Did you not see that the papers stated that the body was encased in a canvas sack, and a leaden pipe twisted around it?"

"Oh, horrors, then we are lost!"

"Not necessarily, Maria, for it is not certain that the body will ever be identified; and even if it is, we will never know that it was by our hands."

"But ever since that dreadful night I have had a presentiment that all would some day be known,

and if it will what will become of us? Oh, how I have suffered for this crime, and all in obedience to your commands!"

"Commands?"

"Yes, commands! It was the least atonement you would accept from me—that I should kill Louis Atherton—or you would kill us both. All my confessions, all my tears and prayers, did not avail, and you drove me to this desperate deed!"

"Woman, beware what you say! I am in no mood to be charged with being the author of this crime."

"But you shall be, Samuel Tilford, as Heaven is my witness of the vow! True, it is I who took his life, while out walking with him on this very spot, by driving a sword-cane to his heart. It was you who brought him here; it was you who intrigued to decoy him to these very grounds; and it was you who, under a threat to take my life, made me commit the deed."

"And it is I who will now send you to your paramour, where the dead speak not," said the enraged man, with his savage jealousy revived; and he pulled out a pistol and took deliberate aim to fire.

"Hold on!" I cried, springing from behind a dense undergrowth of trees, and striking his arm, the discharge was fired in the air.

"Who are you, sir?" Mr. Tilford inquired.

"Tom Fox, the detective."

"What right have you on these premises?"

"The right of law, and to arrest you and your wife as the murderers of Louis Etherton. It was I who saw you throw the body into the water; it was I who pursued you to this place; it was I who recovered the body, and with this warrant I now propose to surrender you to that power which will mete out the justice you deserve."

Seeing that resistance was in vain, the proud man's head dropped, as he and his wife accompanied me to the gate, where a carriage was waiting to convey us to the city prison.

In all the annals of crime in this city of New York, there never had been such excitement as there was during the trial of Mr. and Mrs. Tilford.

Their high position, the moving cause of the crime, the compulsion of a husband to make his own wife kill her own paramour, combined to make it the celebrated case.

Samuel Tilford and his wife were sentenced to a life term, on account of the former being but the instigator, and the latter not acting under her own free will.

My own share in their detection and arrest paved the way for my future and varied experiences as a detective.

DRY WEATHER AIDS SNAKES

Owing to the dry season this year rattlesnakes have been growing more numerous than ever during the last few weeks at Hot Springs, S. D. They come to the houses and barns in search of water, and the danger from them is unusually great.

Thirteen rattlers were killed recently in a field near Buffalo Gap in one afternoon. Dr. A. J. Melzahn of Hot Springs killed a large snake with seven rattles.

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

PAUPER INVENTED BLANKET

Poverty is responsible for the invention of the blanket. Years ago a man in England lost all his wealth and became very poor.

One cold winter night in 1730 he used a piece of rug, a flannel cloth for a bed covering to keep himself warm, and from this makeshift bed covering he invented the blanket.

The name of this man was Thomas Blanket, and the new kind of bedding has been known under the name of blanket ever since.

GETS ICE CREAM BY STRING.

Passing on Columbus Avenue, New York, were startled to see the candy store cart tie an ice cream carton to a string coming from one of the windows in the flats above. As he waved his hand the package began to rise upward.

"The folks on the top floor do that every night at 11 o'clock in the summer," he explained. "They haven't got a piano and it's a long walk down five flights of stairs and then up again. So they let down a string from the window. I attach a pint of cream, and they pull it up. Next day I get the money."

PUT THE UMPIRE IN A CAGE

Safety first, the oft-repeated warning, was very religiously heeded by the umpire at a recent benefit ball game on the Pacific Coast. He appeared, Popular Mechanics relates, at the park with a large wire contrivance that looked like an exaggerated bird cage. When the game started he took his stand inside the cage. On top of the cage were mounted semaphores, lettered very plainly with the usual umpire's verdicts, "ball," "strike," "out," etc., and his decisions were announced by raising the necessary semaphores. Thus, he was not only safe from unintentional foul balls and the intentional pop bottles of irate fans who differed from his judgment, but he also saved himself from much expenditure of lung power.

TREATS \$20,000 AS TRASH

Entering John W. Ryan's haberdashery shop in the Hotel McAlpin, New York, the other morning, a young man selected a derby, quickly

paid the clerk, Albert C. Thierer, \$7 and, leaving his old felt hat to be thrown away, departed hurriedly.

The old hat and a loosely-tied bundle which seemed valueless were tossed into the big trash basket to be thrown away, but later during an idle moment Thierer bethought himself of the hat and bundle and pulled them out to examine them. He found a money belt and a roll of bills which amounted in all to \$20,000.

A few moments later he dashed the carelessness owner. He turned out to be Joe Brooks of Jacksonville, Fla., a Spaniard staying at the McAlpin. He came to the city to pay a note for his father. He left the shop with his money, greatly relieved, but later in the day he returned and presented the clerk who had discovered the packet with a \$50 bill.

LAUGHS

"Say, why did you give that beggar your watch?" "Oh, just to pass the time away."

First Little Girl—Your papa is awfully cross. Second Little Girl (apologetically)—He used to be an elevated railroad guard.

Godman—Why are you running so fast, my little man? Little Man—I want to get far 'nough away from Jimmy McGouge to tell him I ain't 'fraid of him.

Gibb—I sang a song at the banquet last night and everybody shouted: "Fine!" Dibs—Did any one mention how much the line should have been?

Doctor—Didn't wash, hey? Didn't I tell you to wash all over every morning? Small Boy—Well, yes, when I washed meself yesterday, sez I to meself, I'll wash ag'in now for to-morrow.

McGorry—O'll buy yez no new coat, a'yez moud that! Ye are vain enough already. Mr. McGorry—Me vain? O'm not! Shame, O, don't t'ink meself half as good-lookin' as O'ram.

"I should like to open an account at this bank, if you please." "We shall be glad to accommodate you, madam. What amount do you wish to deposit?" "Oh, but I mean a charge account, such as I have at the big dry-goods stores."

"Elsie," said her mother to a little 5-year-old, who had just finished saying her prayers, "did you ask God to forgive you for being naughty today?" "Yes, mamma, I did," replied the child, "and God said, 'My dear child, there's lots of 'em worse'n you are!'"

"Now, if I were only an ostrich," began the mean man at the breakfast table, as he picked up one of his wife's biscuits, "then——" "Yes," interrupted the patient better-half, "then I might get a few feathers for that old hat I've worn for three winters."

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

ESKIMO FAMILY LAMP BURIED WITH WOMAN

All the life of the Eskimos may be said to revolve around the family lamp, which makes it possible for them to dwell in an otherwise uninhabitable region.

They depend upon it for their very existence. It consists of a shallow semi-circular dish of seal-bone, with a wick of fat-soaked moss. It is covered by a lid from drippings of a piece of seal intestine suspended near the lamp.

Above the lamp is hung a pot for cooking, and above that is a network of thongs containing articles of clothing put there to dry in the ascending warm air.

The lamp gives a brilliant and beautiful light; it cooks the food; it dries the clothes; it heats the house and, not the least important, it melts the snow for drinking water.

The lamp is the recognized property of the woman head of the family, and when she dies it is buried with her.

NO IRON ORE IN 20 YEARS?

The known iron ore resources are far from unlimited and "any statement that our domestic iron resources will last two hundred years is predicted with a heavy uncertainty," Charles W. Pott, Ironwood, Minn., mine operator, declared today at a meeting of officers of the American Mining Congress devoted to discussion of schedule of the pending tariff bill relating to iron and steel.

"The present known reserves of high grade iron ore, based upon the constantly expanding requirements of the steel industry," Mr. Pott asserted, "will be exhausted in twenty years and the merchantile grades of iron ore from the great mines of Minnesota will at the present rate of depletion be practically exhausted within the next fifteen years unless new discoveries are made."

Minnesota deposits, however, the Minnesota Mining operator said, "will last the steel industry as long as the present known high grade deposits of iron ore will last the steel industry."

TRACED CIVIL WAR BULLET

P. J. Knapp, of Kalamazoo, Wash., a Civil War veteran, after fifty-eight years, has traced the course of a bullet he fired at the siege of Vicksburg.

Some time ago Knapp read a news despatch saying W. V. Meadows, a Confederate veteran of Vicksburg, Ala., had coughed up a bullet which was said to have hit his eye at Vicksburg. Meadows, the report said, was a member of the 37th Alabama Regiment and Knapp recalled an incident at the siege, when he and three other members of the 5th Iowa Volunteers were called upon to silence a Confederate sharpshooter who was firing through a small hole in a sheet of boiler plate.

After Knapp fired the sharpshooter's shots were discontinued, and it was surmised he had been shot in the eye.

When Knapp wrote to Meadows the latter said he was the man behind the boiler plate and that the bullet entered his right eye. Knapp received a photograph of the bullet and of Meadows. The two veterans have enjoyed considerable correspondence over the incident.

SHACKLETON PICKS TWO SCOTCH BOY SCOUTS FOR CRUISE

Two Scotch Boy Scouts will soon embark on a cruise of adventure such as their comrades throughout the world daily dream about, for Sir Ernest H. Shackleton, the Antarctic explorer, has selected them from among ten competitors to accompany him in his coming Antarctic expedition as cabin boys aboard his ship, The Quest.

The youths are patrol leaders J. W. S. Marr of Aberdeen, aged 19, and N. E. Mooney of Larbert, in the Orkney Islands, aged 17. The ten picked applicants came to London from all parts of the United Kingdom. Sir Ernest interviewed them to ascertain their qualifications and found so much talent that he could not make a decision until recently.

Young Mooney came all the way from the stormy Orkneys, a journey of 600 miles. He had never seen passenger railway trains before and was so confounded by the big city and its wonders that Sir Ernest could not get him to talk. However, Mooney has a winning personality and knows all about boats and the sea, as does Marr.

The Quest will be gone two or more years.

SEEKERS OF PIRATES' BURIED GOLD RETURN EMPTY-HANDED

Though he did not find the treasure he was seeking at Coos Island in the Pacific, Royce V. Rothwell, motion picture producer, got party of adventure and his money's worth of experience. He got back in town the other day. With a group of other adventurers, Rothwell set out from New York last May to find the Spanish gold which Capt. W. L. Morgan and his pirate crew stole from Spanish churches in Peru in 1820.

Coos Island is 545 miles west-northwest of Panama and is the locate of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Treasure Island." It is uninhabited.

The treasure hunters put off for the island in the sixty-foot schooner rigged specially for adventure. Five weeks were spent by the expedition on Coos Island, cutting their way through the jungle to the spot where the treasure was supposed to be. Old charts were used. But when the adventurers reached the spot indicated in the charts they found that a great landslide covered the spot with from forty to fifty feet of earth and boulders.

To dig through this would be the work of months, and as their food supply was limited it was decided to specially chart the island and return later with more men and implements to excavate.

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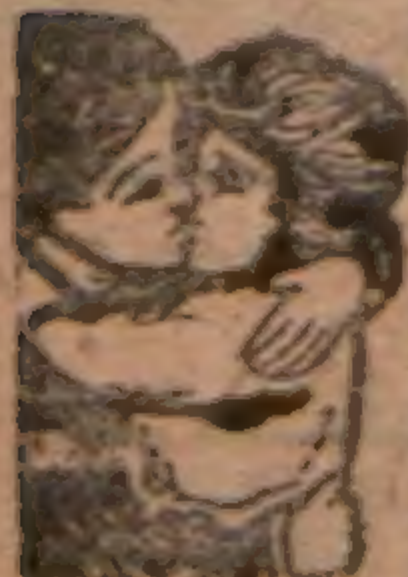


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